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Community Center for the Performing Arts 8th & Lincoln

■ Friday ■  
**Big Hippie**  
CD Release Party,  
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Rock  
\$7 at door, 8:30 pm

■ Saturday ■  
**The Cherry Poppin' Daddies**  
CD Release Party, OPM  
Rock/Funk/Swing  
\$13 advance, \$15 door, 9:00 pm

■ Sunday ■  
**Gregg's Egg's**  
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# REVIEWS

PULSE EDITOR: MONICA HANDE

## 'Average' is anything but

■ 'The Life and Death of Joe Average,' a play appearing at Pocket Playhouse, is a light-hearted comedy



REVIEW

'The Life and Death of Joe Average'

Pocket Playhouse

★★★★☆

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Most people have some goal they want to reach, something that will be a challenge. Certainly, we are not content to just take our lot. Neither is Joe Average, but his goal is actually to be a lesser man than he is.

Joe Average is a guy whose only goal in life is to live up to his name. But mediocrity and normal-

cy aren't in the cards for Joe. As it turns out, Joe Average is anything but that.

"The Life and Death of Joe Average" is a play written and directed by sophomore theater major Matt Chorpenning. It begins its three-day run in the Pocket Playhouse today.

As the play opens, we see Joe Average having just graduated college and being given an entry-level position at a urinal-mint company. With this bright future ahead of him, Joe rushes off to propose to his girlfriend. As Joe is down on one knee proposing, she is so happy that she promptly dies. Upon finding this out, the mother of the unfortunate girl also keels over.

One might think that this play is turning out to be rather sad, but it is surprisingly humorous. It isn't a dark comedy; it's just funny. According to Chorpenning, the audience is supposed to have a good laugh at Joe's expense. We don't feel guilty about doing this be-

cause Joe takes everything with a grain of salt and somehow manages to get back on top — until something else happens.

This light-hearted play has no great purpose and no catharsis — it may not even have a point. But what it does have is hilarious absurdity. Joe's father went insane after his mother died from a fatal addiction to canned cat food. As a result of this insanity, Joe's father believes he is the Virgin Mary and that his son, Joe, is Jesus. Of course, that's only when he doesn't take his medication.

Ultimately, "Joe Average" gives audiences a much-needed emotional break. It is the only one of the five shows being performed in the Pocket this term that is a pure comedy. It reminds us that sometimes legitimate theater doesn't need to do much more than cause a little laughter.

"Joe Average" runs today through Saturday at 5 p.m.

## Synthesizers go hog wild on CD

■ The new magnéphone album features varied time signatures and neat beats



CD REVIEW

magnéphone

two studios

★★★★☆

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

On the surface, it might look like magnéphone is another two-man electronic group following in the footsteps of others like the Propellerheads and The Crystal Method. But that assumption is proved wrong as soon as one hears their music.

The band's latest release, "i guess sometimes i need to be reminded of how much you love me," is their first on record label 4 A.D., which boasts other artists such as the Pixies and the Breeders. The two members, Matt Saunders and John Han-

son, run old synthesizers through a multitude of various effects pedals to create music out of odd sounds.

If you were to take any one sound from a song and let it last only a second, you might think that it was the cry of a dying VCR or a computer connecting to the Internet. But when mixed together in the medley of songs on the album, sometimes the sounds are almost relaxing.

The 13 tracks vary from light to hard in texture, but the most interesting variations are in rhythm.

When you hear a song, you have an underlying knowledge it has a rhythm, but that rhythm is not always easy to pick out. Some songs are in 3/4 time, some in 4/4; one is even in 5/4, which is unusual in popular music. The rest of the time, the rhythm is indeterminate.

Those tricky guys in magnéphone will even fool you by establishing a steady rhythm and then disturbing it. When listening to the album for the first two times, I was constantly checking to see if the CD was skipping. So if you hate it when CDs get scratched, buy this album on the sole principle that

you won't be able to tell the difference.

The titles of the songs are another oddity. Names such as "humdah" or "how I learned to love the future" have nothing to do with anything and were created with a combination of Scrabble tiles and a Ouija board. The band seems to be playing some joke, mocking the seriousness of musicians in the electronic industry.

It is true that with the growing popularity of electronic music, people are beginning to grow weary of artists who try to be too deep and meaningful. This band seems to be just a couple of guys who like to make fun music. The odd sounds and rhythms and even the title that they use to disturb and intrigue listeners are like little funny jokes.

The bottom line is that magnéphone has made an album that is multifaceted. You could sit down with your headphones and intently listen to the music, or you could have it be an ambient sound in the background. Either way, it is equally enjoyable.

## PlayStation2 not yet worth price



GAME REVIEW

Sony Corp.'s PlayStation2 is an intriguing middle step in the evolution of video games — somewhat like the first fish to pop out legs and awkwardly scramble onto the beach.

Home video game systems have been around for almost a quarter century, from nearly forgotten pioneers such as Atari and Coleco to modern heavyweights Nintendo, Sega and Sony.

But even as these systems have grown incredibly in computing horsepower, they still aren't used for anything more than playing games.

Industry leaders have been talk-

ing for almost a decade about using that horsepower for other tasks, ranging from loosely defined "interactive entertainment" that would appeal to a broader audience than conventional video games to Web surfing and online shopping.

PlayStation2 (www.playstation.com), arriving recently in very limited quantities at \$299, is the first video game console created with these broader goals in mind.

Because of component shortages, Sony made only 500,000 units available Oct. 26 instead of the 1 million promised earlier this year.

Even though Sony promises to ship 100,000 units a week through the end of the year, the PlayStation2 will likely be hard to find on store shelves until after the holiday rush.

Gamers are excited about

PlayStation2 because it is much more powerful than the original PlayStation, making for more realistic characters and backgrounds, faster action and better sound.

The central processor, for example, runs at 295 megahertz and crunches instructions in 128-bit chunks, while the original PlayStation's electronic brain works with paltry 32-bit instructions.

PlayStation2 is built around a DVD drive, so the system can play DVD movies as well as game discs. In a first for video game consoles, the PlayStation2 is backward compatible; it will play the complete library of original PlayStation titles.

I borrowed a PlayStation2 from Sony but could only get my hands on one game: a martial-arts fight fest called "Tekken Tag Tourna-

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