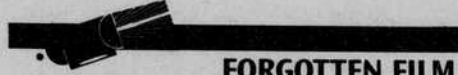




## Martial arts, spirituality, war and ... a redneck truck driver?

■ 'Big Trouble in Little China' features the classic villain, the stereotypical hero, and lots of martial arts action



### 'Big Trouble in Little China'

★★★★☆

By Mason West and Rebecca Wilson  
Oregon Daily Emerald

With the recent success of Ang Lee's blockbuster "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," we decided to revisit one of the earlier martial arts epics, "Big Trouble in

Little China." This is a movie that affirms the widely known fact that all Chinese people know martial arts and are engaged in gang wars with deep spiritual and religious motives. It also answers the age old question: What happens when you throw a redneck, brazen truck driver (basically the stereotypical male that every other culture pictures) in the middle of such a war? Of course, he saves the day.

Who could be more perfect to play this feller than Kurt Russell? If anyone is planning on seeing the upcoming "3000 Miles to Graceland," "Big Trouble in Little China" is definitely a prerequisite. Russell plays Jack Burton, a truck driver who has stopped to see his friend Wang in China-

town, San Francisco. When Wang's fiancée is stolen by the "Lords of Death," he ends up involved in the war between two ancient Chinese clans, the Chang Sing and the Wing Kong. You can tell that the Chang Sing are good because they wear yellow turbans and the Wing Kong are bad because they wear red turbans.

Mason — It's so simple.

Rebecca — Yes, it is. Yes it is.

Anyway, the Wing Kong are being controlled by the evil Lo Pan, a man who has been cursed for more than 2000 years to be "of no flesh." He has been searching for a girl with green eyes to repeal the curse. Wouldn't you know it, Wang's fiancée has green eyes. What are the chances? So all Lo Pan needs to do is make sure he can tame the naked blade, marry her and then kill her.

Mason — Funny, that's the same thing I'm going to have to do to pay off my college loans.

Rebecca — That's what I'm talkin' about.

So, to combat the evil forces of Lo Pan and his three super-powered henchmen, Jack, Wang, the local sorcerer/tour bus driver Egg Shen and the Chang Sing drink a magic potion that gives them similar super abilities, which Jack demonstrates by shooting the ceiling and having rocks fall on his head.

We are obligated to mention Jack's love interest, Gracie Law, played by Kim Cattrall who now appears in television's "Sex and the City," but who we all remember as the lovable dummy from "Mannequin." Let's just say the dummy thing is a bit of a recurring theme in her career. Then there is the

even more stupid journalist character, who we feel is just a disgrace to the profession.

Mason — It's funny how I never noticed her until now.

Rebecca — You probably blocked it out of your memory.

But what you can't get out of your memory are those beauty quotes. Try some on for size.

"You are not brought upon this world to 'get it'" — Lo Pan

"How do you think I feel? I lost a whole girl!" — Wang

"It's all in the reflexes." — Jack.

"All I ask in order to conquer the universe is that you give me flesh and blood." — Lo Pan

"We really shook the pillars of heaven, didn't we Wang?" — Jack

Rebecca — The ridiculous dialogue almost reconciled me to the exploitation of Chinese culture. Unfortunately, I know Chinese people who are neither evil nor mysterious, so some of the humor was lost on me.

Mason — Oh, shuck it, Trebek!

Putting our petty differences in racial sensibility aside, we have decided to give the movie three stars. It is a classic campy film with random monsters, to boot! Not to mention the invaluable life lessons that will help protect you on your next visit to San Francisco's Chinatown. Remember: red = bad, yellow = good.

Rebecca — I can't believe we made it through the entire review without making fun of Wang's name.

Mason — Ha ha ha, wang is slang for penis.

## Fresh musician's message, emotion, manner emerge

■ In her debut album, Shea Seger offers a sense of confusion with enticing lyrics and novel sounds



### Shea Seger 'May Street Project'

RCA

★★★★☆

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

As my fellow critic Dave Depper intimated in a Pulse article a few weeks ago, it is time for crappy pop music to die. But although he noted that pop's destruction would be heralded by third-class artists, we also have a viable alternative to kick the habit.

New artist Shea (pronounced

SHAY-a) Seger is helping to lead us back to the right path in music with her debut album "May Street Project." Here is a 21-year-old who could very well be singing the same hackneyed tunes with electronic beats that pervade top-10 radio. Instead, she blends modern musical styles with a basic rock and blues base and simple emotional lyrics that we can all relate to.

Seger's musical style is not easy to classify except that it has playful soul. She blends more electrical sounds and samples here and there with her acoustic guitar and varying vocal styles, which range from those of Fiona Apple and Dido.

Seger's words can really touch each individual, but a contradictory feeling is brought about by the musical tone's conflict with lyrical meaning. "Shatterwall," a song about trying to connect with people, has a lamenting chorus moaning in the background like a wailing wind.

Ooooo, metaphor. At the same time, a grandmother-like voice says, "You've got to go over the bridge and talk to your neighbor." The effect is inner conflict. You want to listen to grandma and go over the bridge, but you feel like there's something scary over there that those voices are warning you about. What to do?

The songs on the album represent these conflicts and paradoxes inherent in relationships by providing an almost equal number of "Yay Relationships!" songs and "Relationships Suck" songs. I must state one of my assumptions at this point: Everyone is going through, has gone through or will go through the problems that the songs on "May Street Project" deal with. I could justify myself, but just believe me on this one.

The first single "Last Time," for example, is a song about liberation, but it doesn't ignore the weakness that makes it difficult to leave the situation. As the chorus begins saying, "And if I

wake up next to you/it will be the last time," Seger reminds listeners of similar mistakes they have likely made.

Way over on the other side of the scale are tunes like "Always." The song is a duet between Seger and singer Ron Sexsmith. During the chorus, they both sing, "You said you'd save me/but I don't want to be saved/I just want to be loved/and to love/always." I know that it sounds really bad in text, but when they're singing, you will believe it, man. It's definitely the kind of song that couples will cuddle to on special days.

Seger's integration of male and female sentiments in her lyrics are what will make this album successful. As a member of the penis-potential population, female artists have to work much harder to interest me with their music. It is too easy to fall into that "angry-girl-with-a-guitar" routine. But Seger doesn't isolate her male audience at all. Each song could be an anthem

for any person regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation dealing with relationship problems.

With all this talk about problems, it would be easy to take this album too seriously. That would be a mistake. Seger celebrates herself and her confusion on the album and whether a particular song has a happy or sad tone, she is enjoying making it. This is the most apparent on the upbeat song "I Can't Lie." This song makes use of southern tones that reflect her upbringing in Texas while she sings about frustration with and withdrawal from the world.

Seger left her southern home in 1998 for London, where the album was recorded. Now with "May Street Project," she returned to the states in June, and college radio stations will receive the album for play March 5. KWVA has my recommendation to put it into rotation so all you wonderful people can hear this talented youngster.

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