

2 bands, 2 styles, 1 musician equals tons of fun

■ Scott McCaughey's fabulous two-disk album features The Minus 5 and The Young Fresh Fellows



'Let the war against music begin'

Mammoth

★★★★☆
By Dave Depper
for the Emerald

Here's a hard album to explain. First off, there are two discs included with it. Easy enough. Second, each of the discs is by a different band, The Minus 5 and The Young Fresh Fellows, respectively. Hmm. Finally, both of these bands are led by the same singer/songwriter/guitarist, Scott McCaughey. What's going on here?

Well, it all basically boils down to McCaughey's talent and productivity. If you are an R.E.M. fan, you have probably heard him playing guitar and keyboards on the last two releases, "New Adventures in Hi-fi" and "Up." He is also their official touring back-up guitarist. McCaughey formed The Young Fresh Fellows in the early '80s in Seattle. The Fellows enjoyed moderate suc-

cess throughout the decade, often touring with the Replacements and eventually supporting the Red Hot Chili Peppers on the "Mother's Milk" tour.

The Minus 5 came together in 1994 and basically consisted of McCaughey and R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck, along with a revolving cast of musicians who play instruments as unconventional as sleigh bells. The disc boasts the clever title "Let the War Against Music Begin." Simply put, this is pop music at its shimmering best. Nearly every song on this album boasts a very sophisticated and mind-bendingly intricate arrangement. Layers and layers of sound are stacked up against each other, resulting in a towering edifice of music.

Upon first listening to the album, my initial reaction was something along the lines of "hey, this sounds a hell of a lot like the Beach Boys — 'Pet Sounds,' to be precise." This is not a bad thing. "Let the War Against Music Begin" is one of the more musically striking albums in recent memory.

The album has a strange vibe to it. I can't decide whether it is deliriously happy or heartbreakingly sad. Perhaps this feeling is best summed up by McCaughey himself, who says, "I thought it would be cool to do an album about death, loneliness, alcoholism and despair, but



The Young Fresh Fellows, together since the early 1960s, offer contributions to McCaughey's two-disk album of power pop.

Photographer Emerald

have sleigh bells on every song."

In contrast, The Young Fresh Fellows keep it simple and rocking on "Because We Hate You." Just look at some of the song titles: "My Drum Set," "Summerland," "Good Times Rock 'n' Roll." There's no messing about with string sections or glockenspiels here. However, McCaughey's fine pop sensibilities are very much in evidence upon this album.

The songs on "Because We Hate You" are almost absurdly catchy. I have about five of them stuck in my head right now. This is simple, stupid pop music played by four high-energy guys.

If there is any complaint to be made about either of these albums, it is the fact that it is somewhat hard to take them very seriously. How deep can you look into a song called "The Amazing Dolphin Boy" or "Thirsty Bird" (a song that is in fact about a thirsty bird)? Some of the music on these album is incredibly beautiful and sophisticated, and it seems like a bit of a shame to waste such glories upon such silly themes. Furthermore, McCaughey's voice is occasionally irritating. As a

friend of mine put it, "it sounds like he's singing each song with huge, sappy grin on his face." I'm afraid that I would have to agree with this statement.

These complaints are basically splitting hairs, though. "Let the War Against Music Begin" and "Because We Hate You" are blasts of sunshine that hearken back to the glory days of '60s power pop. The fact that you get them both at the same time for a very nice price just adds to the goodness. If you like good, old-fashioned pop music and you aren't looking for any deep lyrical revelations in the near future, then McCaughey's latest works may be right up your alley.

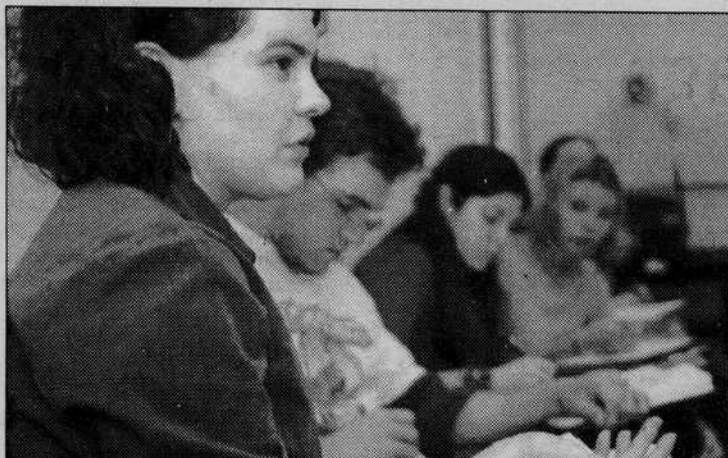
Kidd

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Kidd Tutorial, and it is no secret to those who apply. Barniskis said the quality of applicants as writers is not as important as their quality as students. The class is 400 level and a big commitment, Ameel said. Because the intensity breeds closeness, both Ameel and Houck believe the group is seen by some as elite. But in reality, the Kidd Tutorial is open to everyone, and not only through the program but also with the events that it sponsors.

Each term, the tutorial has a lecture series, which, although geared toward the material Kidd students are studying, are open to the public. Speakers are usually members of the University faculty, promoting the richness of the campus.

Perhaps more enticing than the lecture series are the annual Kidd prizes. The endowment fund that



Laura Smit Emerald

Rebecca Barniskis, head tutor for the Kidd Tutorial Program, conducts a discussion on the poetry of Philip Levine with 10 students and two tutors.

sustains the program also allows for cash prizes to be awarded to submitted works of fiction and poetry by undergraduate students. Prizes are awarded in both fiction and poetry by esteemed judges.

More information about the Kidd program and Kidd prizes can be found through the creative writing department or at www.uoregon.edu/~crwrweb/kiddfrm.htm.

Lesson

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gives an astonishing performance as the Professor making the audience endear and fear him, all in under 90 minutes. I would like to see him nominated for best actor in the annual Pocket Playhouse awards, the Shankies. Mattfeld's physical and vocal interpretations of the

character's metamorphosis are so subtle that the audience is almost lead along like one of his pupils.

Amanda Dumler and Sarah Turnquist play wonderful complements as the Pupil and Marie. Dumler fills the role of the naive student and her endurance of the lesson is at times painful to watch. Turnquist shows the most malevolence in the show playing a charac-

ter who seems to jump in and out of existence at will.

Once again: Go see this play. It may be a while before a play like this is performed in the Eugene area again, and it may be even longer before it is done so well.

"The Lesson" runs today, Friday and Saturday at 5 p.m. in the Pocket Playhouse in Villard hall. There is a \$1 suggested donation.

Angkor

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a lecture March 7 on the history of Angkor. Barlow said Cambodia and its cultural past is relevant to Americans because of the effects of the Vietnam War on Cambodian society.

"Cambodia got screwed over during the Vietnam War," he said. "They were the drive-by victims ... just standing around minding their own business."

Barlow said the Angkor ruins, which were discovered by French colonialists, received only minimal damage during the war. "The monuments were not systematically bombed," he said. "There was just some military vandalism."

The project of photographing the temples at Angkor would be difficult, Barlow said, because of its huge size. "It's a really beautiful area. I'm excited to see the exhibit because I've heard [the photographs] really do it justice," he said.

The elegant details of the photographs stem not only from their unique subject but also from the interesting developing process. A 1996 profile of Izu in the New York Times described "the laborious platinum-palladium print-making process [and the] custom-made camera that produces 14-by-20 inch negatives."

Mark Hudson, a graduate student in sociology, happened to see the exhibit by chance in the McMillan Gallery. He said that he knew very little about photography but was impressed with the exhibit, nonetheless.

"The details in the pictures are absolutely incredible," he said. Angkor "looks like a really amazing place."

The opening reception for "Lights Over Ancient Angkor" will take place at 7 p.m. March 7 in the EMU Oak Room. The evening will begin with a lecture by Professor Barlow and will feature catered food and live music. Best of all, the event is absolutely free.

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