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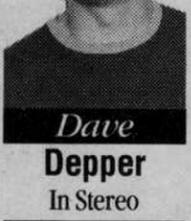
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Music needs high 'sex quotient'

Ah, Valentine's Day. A time for the "twitterpated" lovers of the world to feel smug, revel in their perfect happiness, slow dance and buy each other candy. It's also the one day of the year that a guy can be pretty sure of the fact that his girlfriend will be "in the mood."



Dave Depper
 In Stereo

Valentine's Day tends to evoke one of two reactions from people: Those with a significant other are generally reduced to drooling idiots, while those without often spend the week before grumbling about how stupid the holiday is, how it was manufactured by Hallmark, etc.

While my own Valentine's evening could more than likely end with me face down on the floor of the bathroom at John Henry's, I don't want this column to reflect any sort of bitterness or clichéd complaining. I want people out there to get laid! In that spirit, I'd like to present a couple of recently released albums that could be the perfect soundtrack to a night of romance — or drunken self-torture, clutching a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken, watching Silk Stalkings on USA with the volume muted.

For those of us who have a secret desire to be porn stars (and come on people, stop denying it), listening to the album "Nathaniel Merriweather presents Lovage: Music to Make Love to Your Old Lady By" is probably the closest that we're going to get.

"Nathaniel Merriweather" is really a pseudonym for omnipotent hip-hop producer Dan "The Automator" Nakamura, who is the genius behind Handsome Boy Modeling School, Dr. Octagon, and the wildly popular Gorillaz. The back cover of the album reveals that "lovage" is "an herb that is said to be a benefit for relieving abdominal pains due to gastrointestinal gas," but the main focus of "Lovage" is sex, sex and more sex.

Throughout the CD, Nakamura lays down lushly dark hip-hop tracks, complete with a sexy string section and a whole lot of cheesy classical guitar. On top of all this, singers Mike Patton (of Faith No More!) and Jennifer Charles pretty much act out their darkest fantasies, to always interesting, and at times, disturbing results. There's a lot of orgasms to be heard on "Lovage," and who can resist lyrics like "you are the bitter / I am the sweet / you are the griddle / I am the meat"?

In short, if you and your partner are into being a little bit naughty, "Lovage" is the drug.

For those of us who just want a grade-A, sexy make-out album, I can recommend nothing more highly than the debut album by

English chill-meisters Zero 7. "Simple Things" is a tour-de-force of subtlety, swagger and yes, sex.

In describing "Simple Things," I provide this analogy: If a pornographic film ever wins the Oscar for Best Picture, this album would be the soundtrack. Why? Simply put, this is lovin' music of a very sophisticated, intellectual, yet non-cheesy variety.

About half of the songs are instrumental, with a tempo as slow as molasses. Great washes of keyboards pour over basslines so intensely sexy that they might provoke a physical reaction. Many of the songs fade in and out like a pleasant dream.

The songs with vocals are equally amazing. I don't know where Zero 7 found these people, but there's a girl whose sultriness will send shivers up your spine and a guy who sounds like he could be Marvin Gaye's long-lost twin brother.

It's tempting to compare Zero 7 to fellow make-out maestros Air, but Zero 7 ditches all of Air's artiness and ups the sex quotient about 300 percent. "Simple Things" is tailor-made for baby-making.

And with these two recommendations, I scream to the masses, "Consummate! Consummate!"

Happy Valentine's Day, everybody.

E-mail columnist Dave Depper at davedepper@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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