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# 'Arrow' blazes hip-hop trail

Bay Area hip-hop duo Blackalicious features a diverse pool of talent on its major label debut, 'Blazing Arrow'



## CD REVIEW

Blackalicious 'Blazing Arrow'

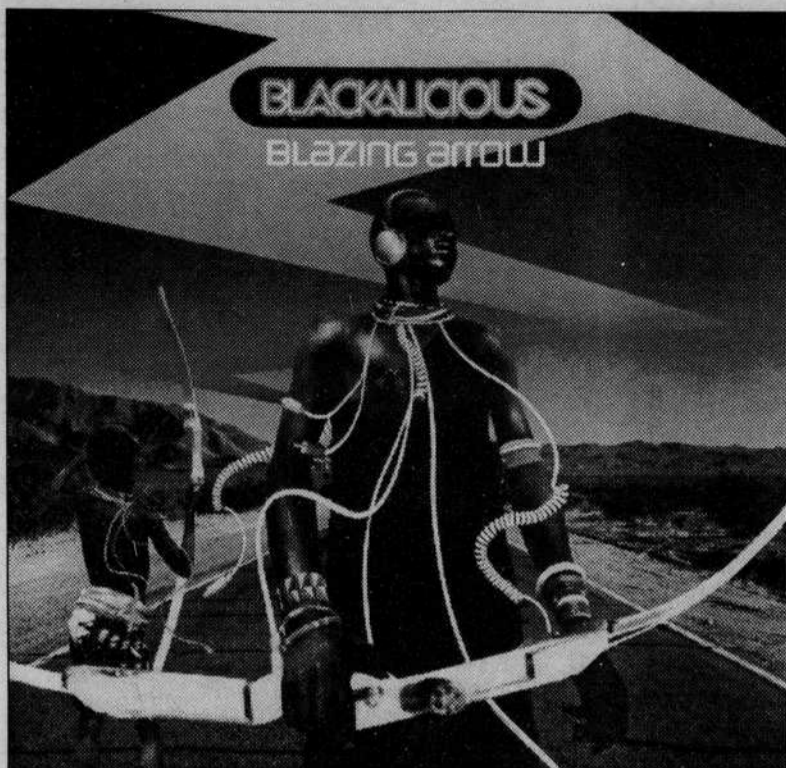
By Alix Kerl  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Dodge this blazing arrow, and make way for Blackalicious' new album.

Blackalicious is one of the most talented hip-hop groups in existence, and "Blazing Arrow," their new album, shows off this talent throughout its 17 tracks. The Bay Area duo's newest album is not only their major label debut, but it is also a successful showing of their talent and their willingness to experiment.

Blackalicious is a result of the juxtaposition of lyricist Gift of Gab and DJ/producer Chief X-Cel. The rhymes on "Blazing Arrow" are smooth and electrifying, and the beats are impressive.

In true hip-hop style, the group gets help from everyone and their



momma. The group includes Quantum Posse, Dilated Peoples' Rakaa and Babu, and Jurassic 5's Cut Chemist and Chali 2NA. Rockers Ben Harper and Rage Against the Machine's Zach de la Rocha also contribute to the album. Several

tracks are also laid down by DJ Shadow and Saul Williams, and Lyrics Born provide lyrical help on "Release part 1, 2, & 3."

"Release" is a homage to the

Turn to Blackalicious, page 9

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Senior Holly Wagner, left, and junior Ledena Mattox duke it out 'Star Wars' style. 'I had a Princess Leia action figure, and it was my favorite toy ever,' Wagner said. She said her brother later decapitated the toy with a butter knife.

## Analysis

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Sobstyl, who is currently studying the relationships between science fiction and feminist science, believes that the science fiction genre is targeted at young men.

"In some ways, 'Star Wars' is really an elaborate and expensive commercial for video games," Sobstyl said.

She believes that "Star Wars" is constructed in a way that appeals to males rather than females, with its constant references to toys, gadgetry and video games, which have typically been a male domain. Sobstyl argues that this type of masculinity is not inherent, but a social construction.

Emerald City Comics manager Stuart Bracker thinks the movies' appeal is simpler than that. He does not think the series is targeted at males. Rather, he said the films follow the formula of universal myth stories that traditionally focus on the heroics of males.

"'Star Wars' is inherently for children," Bracker said. "It's not really targeted at anyone, although the new movies are targeted at 'Star Wars' fans."

Bracker said he knows both men

and women who are fans of the movies, but he added that men are drawn to the comics, while women tend to be more interested in the books. There are hundreds of "Star Wars" books that detail a world richer than the movies and include a variety of different characters, Bracker said.

One of these characters is Mara Jade, a former assassin working for the evil Emperor Palpatine who ends up married to Luke Skywalker. She is a tough woman and a favorite of fans, but she never appears in the movies, Bracker said.

"The books have very strong women. The movies don't," Eugene resident Rachel Turpin said. While Turpin is a fan of both the "Star Wars" novels and the old movies, she refuses to see either "The Phantom Menace" or "Attack of the Clones."

"The new movies don't have the same zip, but I love the books — the books are great," she said.

Bracker said that in the movies, both Leia and Amidala are good role models in their own ways. Anakin Skywalker's mother is another character in the two newer movies, but both Bracker and Turpin agreed that she was too weak to be a good female role model.

"Princess Leia got to be a strong role model: a diplomat and a fighter," Bracker said. "She even got to strangle Jabba the Hutt (in 'Return of the Jedi') in the end, even if she was wearing skimpy clothes. And she was the one who found the way out of the trash compactor (in the original 'Star Wars')."

Bracker added that Amidala had to have been strong to be elected queen by her people at age 14, and sources have hinted that Amidala has a stronger role as a warrior in "Attack of the Clones."

"She had political savvy," Bracker said.

Sobstyl now prefers Japanese anime over "Star Wars" as her science fiction of choice because it is more gender-friendly and more concerned with the environment, she said.

Anime's physical portrayal of women is still stereotypical, but "they have female protagonists whose femininity is important to the story — rather that accidental," she said.

Bracker concedes that Leia is portrayed as a bit of a sex object.

But, he added, "Han Solo is also a sex object."

E-mail reporter Alix Kerl at alixkerl@dailyemerald.com.

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