

120 BEERS



Live music featuring:
The Rag and Bone Men,
Invisiblink, and
Junk City Zero with
The Goa Constrictor DJing
between sets.

\$20 Unlimited Sampling.
All ages, 21+ to sample.

Saturday May 31, 2003

Two Sessions: 1-5pm / 6-10pm
Tickets: \$20 advance/\$25 door
At the Lane County Fairgrounds in Eugene, OR
For tickets & more info

Call: 888-945-BEER
or beersummit.com



RECYCLE

Albums mix bland sound, mediocre lyrics

Music review

Ryan Nyburg
Pulse Columnist

Film critics often say the easiest reviews to write are either for great films or terrible films. It's the ones in between that are difficult. I have recently found, after wading through a vast sea of musical mediocrity, the same goes for music. What adjectives do you attach to an album that is merely "OK"? 'Might as well haul out the thesaurus and give it a shot.

First off is the new solo album from Depeche Mode keyboardist and guitarist Martin L. Gore, "Counterfeit 2." Oh goody, 1980s nostalgia. The album is a collection of covers radically reworked by Gore into droning synth-trash with vocals that never make it beyond lounge singer-style crooning. I think the best example of what is wrong with this album can be summed up in the cover of Nick Cave's "Loverman," a song practically begging for menace and over-the-top vocal pyrotechnics. Gore, on this track and through the rest of the album, barely reaches a whimper.

While the production values are superb, this doesn't translate to them being interesting. The whole album feels like Depeche Mode B-sides — well done, eclectic, but not worth the trouble, and certainly not the material for a full-length album.

Next, a little something for the coffeehouse crowd: Pseudo folk singer Brian Webb's "Broken Folk." The album is full of early 1990s pop-rock melodies. Unfortunately, it also contains all the lyrical clichés from that era as well. As I always say, it's difficult to take someone seriously as a songwriter when they remind you of Matchbox 20. This is the kind of light rock that never seems to break out of the Starbucks concert circuit. The only track with any semblance of life in it is "Oh Lord," a bluesy number that wants so badly to rock but never seems to take off. Webb will perform in Eugene on May 15, but no venue has been announced at this time.

Speaking of songwriters who sound like other, better songwriters, Rod Picott has released his sophomore effort, "Stray Dogs." This man sounds too much like Bruce Springsteen for me to ever be comfortable



Courtesy

with him. Aside from personal prejudice, the album is just on the brink of being really good. Unfortunately it gets bogged down in its similarities to other artists. Picott sounds like his influences, not himself, and it's only on a couple of the latter tracks that he seems to develop his own voice. Unfortunately it's all for naught; what doesn't sound like Tom Petty or The

Boss are bland filler tracks you forget about before they're over.

Now for something worthwhile. The San Francisco band Vue just released a limited edition EP as a preview of a new full-length album, which is due sometime this summer. The band has liberal doses of that garage rock sound that's so trendy these days, but unlike most bands on that trip, Vue has more eclectic influences. There are surf and rockabilly guitar lines laid over the distorted riffs. 1960s pop melodies and even some rough Broadway musical numbers are buried under all the noise — Burt Bacharach by way of The Sonics. While much of the EP feels incomplete, it shows promise, and the upcoming album should be one to wait for.

So that's it. Three albums not worth the trouble and one decent 18-minute EP. Not the most invigorating collection of music, but informing the public is what we do. And if you've learned anything from these albums, it's that you should save your money for summer.

Contact the Pulse columnist at ryannyburg@dailymerald.com.

BOOK YOUR SUMMER IN OREGON



2003 SUMMER SESSION

GROUP-SATISFYING AND ELECTIVE COURSES, SHORT COURSES, SEMINARS, AND WORKSHOPS BEGIN THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER.

Summer session begins June 23. Registration begins May 5. The *UO Summer Session Catalog with Schedule of Classes* will be available in early April. You can speed your way toward graduation by taking required courses during summer.

2003 SUMMER SCHEDULE

- First four-week session: June 23–July 18
- Second four-week session: July 21–August 15
- Eight week session: June 23–August 15
- Eleven week session: June 23–September 5

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
SUMMER
SESSION



2003

333 Oregon Hall
1279 University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403-1279
Telephone (541) 346-3475

Check our website
<http://uosummer.uoregon.edu>



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Picnic

continued from page 7

Shapiro neither glamorizes nor demonizes these people; he simply makes their plight appear understandable, human, real.

The longest story in the collection, "two hermits," at 14 pages (most average six pages), is easily my favorite. Here the main character is narrating the tale. He's aware that he's going crazy, and he describes it to you, but you feel helpless watching it happen.

The power of this collection is most evident in "two hermits": Shapiro weaves compelling, frightening and exciting tapestries. The fact that he's also bringing out the realities of living with mental illness is beside the point. These are great short stories.

Perhaps I relate to these stories so much because I've sometimes thought I was going crazy; I recognized I was just a few steps away from being diagnosed, and I thank the universe it's never gone that far.

Or, it could be that Shapiro has engaged these mental illnesses in such a way that anyone can recognize the ways our brains malfunction.

In either case, everyone should give "Short of a Picnic" a read. There is little help in America for people with mental illnesses — especially in Oregon's post-Measure 28 budget nightmare — and we should all be ashamed.

Instead of shame, though, here's a better scenario: Americans could understand the reality of mental illnesses and provide appropriate care. This book is one step in that direction.

"Short of a Picnic" is on sale right now at www.amazon.com, and it also can be purchased from the publisher at www.Be-Mused.com.

Contact the editor in chief at editor@dailymerald.com.