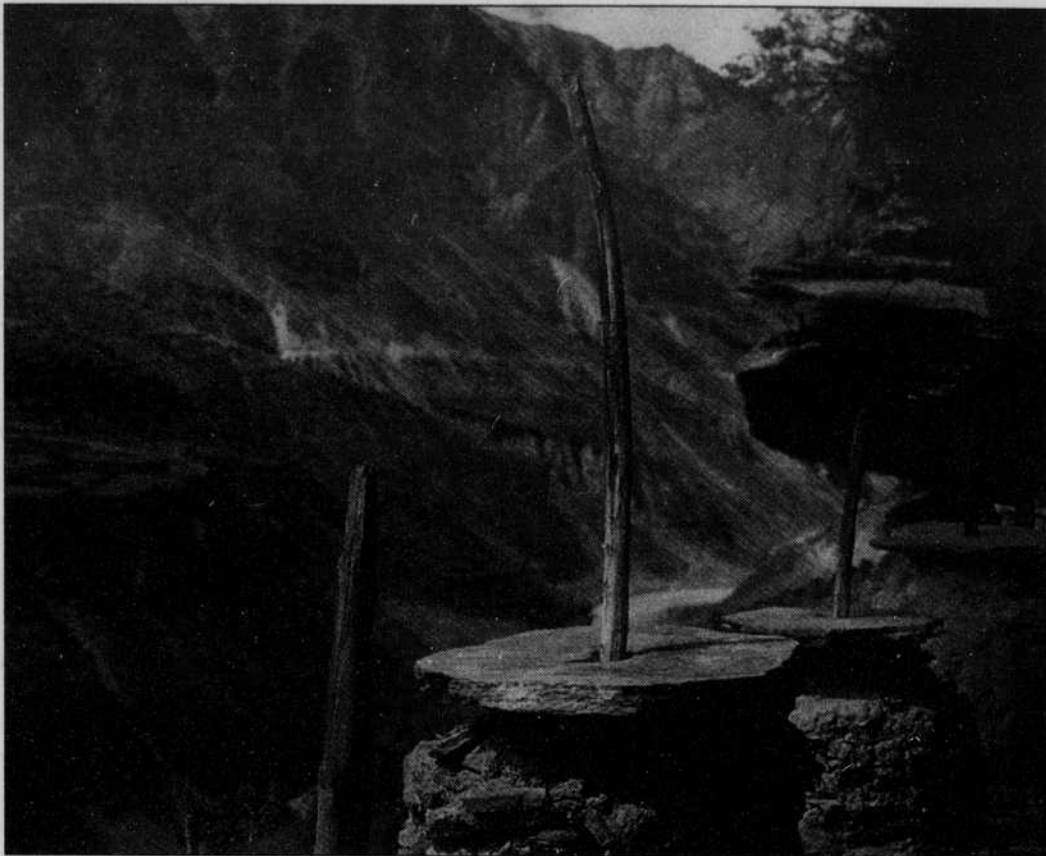


'HIMALAYAN VISIONS'



Courtesy

Brian Harris' photography will be featured in a multimedia show that opens today at the McDonald Theatre. Harris uses some of the proceeds from his work to fund the Seva Service Society's sight restoration programs in Tibet.

Weirdos compilation shines

The re-release from the Los Angeles punk band is welcome in today's unoriginal music climate

By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

I don't listen to hype or buzz very often. Because of this I found myself listening to The Strokes' new album, "Room On Fire," with no knowledge of the band other than that this is their second release and there was a big whoop-dee-doo about them a few years back. Now I wonder: what was all the fuss about?

The band deals in a forgotten type of 1970s pop rock that quite a few people seem to be picking up these days. The emphasis is on catchy hooks and melodies, few if any instrumental solos and sentimental or angst-filled lyrical content. All fine and dandy, but the question still remains: so what?

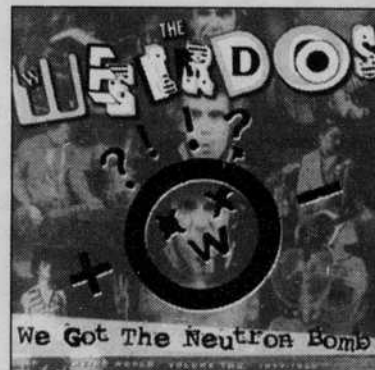
I have nothing against pop-rock and in fact laud it when it is well done. But it seems The Strokes have forgotten the "rock" portion of the equation. Their music has the feeling of complacency, as if the band were so self-satisfied that they never felt the need to try anything new, or to at least bust out and boogie. Many of the songs lack the energy or creativity to make them real forces of nature, and often the band just plugs

away as if they were just waiting for a hit single to come along.

I won't disparage them the fact that they have a distinctive, not to mention quite likable, sound. The low-fi vocals and pristine arrangements, combined with melodies pulled right out of the Burt Bacharach songbook, give the music a nice, easy flow. I just wish they would have done more with it.

Unlike The Strokes, The Weirdos knew how to make original, interesting music without having much in the way of chops or production values. As one of the seminal Los Angeles punk bands from the 1970s, they released only a handful of recorded material, much of it now impossible to find in its original form. Fortunately, the band is getting about the same treatment the Misfits got a few years back, and much of their music is now available on CD. "We Got The Neutron Bomb: Weird World Volume Two" is the latest of these re-releases, compiling material recorded between 1977 and 1989.

What is revealed in these recordings is a band that created some of the best music from the early days of punk. Their songs, loud and furious but tinged with pop melodies, often carried the political messages that would become so prevalent in the genre a few years later. Tracks like "Shining Silver Light" have a bit of political sophistication, while at the same time pounding away with a wicked beat and lightening fast riffs. It's the kind of music punk was meant to be: aggressive enough to get the message through but catchy



Courtesy

'We Got The Neutron Bomb' is the latest release from Los Angeles' The Weirdos.

enough to keep people listening.

This isn't to say that every song on the album is a long-lost classic of punk. Instrumental tracks like "Hey Big Oil" and "Skateboards To Hell" sound like rejected Devo demos, nothing but simplistic electric plodding that feels more self-indulgent than anything else. The title track, which is indisputably a punk rock classic, already appeared in another version on the last compilation and on this album is a rather useless retread.

But the compilation is successful in that it reflects the spotty record of the band itself. Powerhouse songs like "Cyclops Helicopter" and "What Will You Do?" make the whole thing worthwhile not just for punk collectors but anyone into great rock 'n' roll.

Contact the senior pulse reporter at ryan.nyburg@dailyemerald.com.

PULSE BRIEF

Eugene hosts rock, folk artists this month

Here are a few concerts that are coming up over the next month in Eugene.

Tonight at the Wild Duck Music Hall, Michelle Shocked will be performing a 21-and-over show beginning at 9 p.m. Doors open at 8 p.m. and tickets are \$15 in advance and \$17 at the door. The Wild Duck is located at 169 W. Sixth Avenue.

On Saturday, folk artists Cris Williamson and Holly Near will be performing at 8 p.m. at the McDonald Theatre. Doors open at 7 p.m. and

tickets are available in advance for \$22.50 at any TicketsWest outlet. Tickets on the day of the show are \$25. The McDonald Theatre is located at 1010 Willamette St. The show will be open to all ages.

The Indigo Girls will be coming to the Hult Center for the Performing Arts on Nov. 12. Advance tickets cost \$25 and are available at the Hult Center Box Office and the EMU Ticket Office. Tickets the day of the show will be \$28. The show is open to all ages and begins at 8 p.m. The Hult Center is located at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Willamette Street.

Jazz artists Bill Mays and Dan Balmer will be performing at Luna on

Nov. 15 at 8 p.m.. Tickets are available via a \$15 cover charge for general admission and a \$10 cover charge for students. Luna is located at 30 E. Broadway.

On Nov. 18 at the WOW Hall, the Mad Caddies will be performing, along with the Queens, Maxeen and Even in Blackouts. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Doors open at 8 p.m.. Also at the WOW Hall, Death Cab for Cutie and Nada Surf will be performing on Nov. 19. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Doors open at 8 p.m.. The WOW Hall is located at 291 W. Eighth Avenue.

— Ryan Nyburg

BARENAKED

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lost dream of staying with her forever; it's capable of producing an emotional pang or two. The most touching song on the album is the gorgeous "War On Drugs." It's a soft, heartfelt tune about the various effects of drugs on humanity, including destroyed relationships, suicides and mental anguish. The hopelessness of drug addicts is exposed explicitly with the words, "They say that Jesus and mental health / Are just for those who can help themselves / What good is that when you live in Hell on

Earth? / The very fear that makes you want to die / Is the same as what keeps you alive / It's more trouble than your suicide is worth."

"Everything to Everyone" contains appropriate music for both giddy and solemn moods. It's a great example of the Barenaked Ladies' talent for writing great jamming tunes and creative lyrics, then bringing them to life beautifully, whether the pace is fast or slow.

Contact the Pulse reporter at natashachillingerian@dailyemerald.com.

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