

2004's dull election could be improved à la California race

With the presidential election looming, it's safe to assume that we will have someone running our country into the ground again. Whether it's George W. Bush or some other smirking fool seems to be seen.

Bush doesn't seem too fazed by all the bashing and cursing of the American people or the Democratic Party. He is either gearing up for his trip to Mars or too busy planning an overhaul of the election process again.

After all, someone has to start sorting out which multi-national corporation is going to back a third party that will split the Democratic vote. But given the current state of the Democratic candidates, that third-party plan might not even need to take shape.



Carl Sunderberg

Reasoning with madness

With the Democratic candidates looking less like presidential hopefuls and more like angry monkeys throwing feces at each other, it's really not a stretch to say that King George will reign for another four years. If the Democrats were smart—and it's slowly starting to show that they are not—they would do the right thing: use the lesson learned in the farce and infotainment extravaganza that was last year's California recall and bring in celebrity politicians, or more accurately, "celebrities."

Sure, it might have sounded strange just last year to think this, but if you think back, celebrities have filled political positions many times in our recent past. Sonny Bono, Jesse "the Body" Ventura and Ronald Reagan were all in the limelight before they ever saw their name gleaming on a ballot. And really, if Arnold Schwarzenegger can be a governor, this whole political thing can't be that difficult.

Setting up a proper environment, one that will enable the celebrity to thrive, is the only thing that needs to be done. There are rules to this process, after all.

First, the political hopeful can't be a porn star, a midget or a watermelon-smashing comedian. This was the hidden lesson learned from the California election.

Second, the celebrity must be famous today,

not someone the world has forgotten. For instance, Burt Reynolds, Tony Danza or anyone from the cast of "Saved by the Bell" won't work. You need someone who is either in a current blockbuster summer action movie or frequents grocery store magazine covers. For example, Ben Affleck might work because every man, woman and child in America knows who he is. But he's not right for public office. He's got far too much to worry about with keeping J.Lo out of bad movies (so far he's 0 for 2).

Third, the celebrity must have the suave persona that Americans cherish; someone that can lie to us with authority and vigor.

And finally, if nothing else was learned from the California recall, one lesson remains: politics are a joke. Anyone who says otherwise is most likely a politician.

With these rules in mind, and with great consideration, the only person that seems to clearly stand out for the position of Democratic presidential hopeful is none other than Jon Stewart, host of "The Daily Show." He fits all the criteria of celebrity: He is in our short-sighted collective unconscious, he's been on magazine covers and he's not a porn star. The man's wit knows no end, which tames the final criteria of being a politician: being able to make us laugh.

Surely, the argument is beginning to form in your head. You may be asking yourself, "What other credentials does this man have?" The answer is simple: none. He has no presidential credentials. But did Schwarzenegger? No. All he needed was to spout off lines from his movies, and he won with a landslide.

If Jon Stewart told a few jokes each time he stood behind a podium, that would be all he would need. Make a few empty promises and finish with a punch line. In a debate, Stewart would knock Bush around like a shoe in a dryer. The crowd would roar and rush to the ballot booths. George W. Bush wouldn't stand a chance.

After Stewart is elected, his Cabinet might consist of such names as Bill Maher starring as vice president, Martin Sheen as secretary of state, Robert DeNiro as attorney general, Nicole Kidman as secretary of education and The Rock as secretary of defense.

This is not to say that the new Democratic rule would be a success in terms of the economy, medical benefits or education, but this country has seen worse. At least with an all-star cast running the country, politics might be interesting enough for the average American to wake up and care.

Contact the Pulse columnist at carlsunderberg@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Eisley's 'marvelous' EP is anything but; Yeltsin captures indie mood

Yeltsin proves it has the skills to be an indie rock powerhouse with its self-titled EP and will play in Eugene on Saturday night

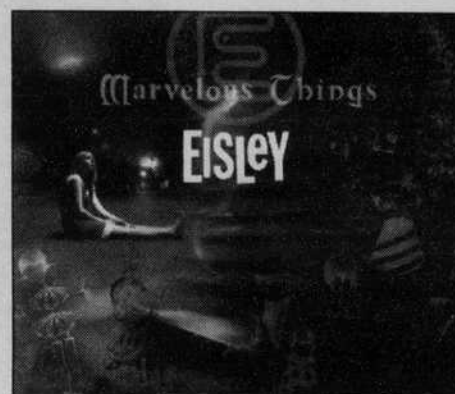
By Ryan Nyburg
Senior Pulse Reporter

The EP, as a form, has never really been developed. Stuck between the quick, easily packaged single and the extended concept of a full album, the EP has usually been used as a promotional tool for unknown acts who don't have that many original songs but need something to show to record labels.

There have been some notable exceptions, such as Black Flag's "Nervous Breakdown" EP, which created hard-core punk in just over five minutes. Mission of Burma's "Signals, Calls and

Marches" was an important part of that short-lived band's discography and Alice in Chains' "Jar of Flies" proved that EPs could sell.

CD REVIEW



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But bands generally release EPs out of necessity rather than out of the desire to create some kind of serious musical statement. The second EP by Eisley, entitled "Marvelous Things," is an exercise in necessity. Without the personality or talent to drum up any interest during the recording's 15 minutes, the band probably needs all the promotional material it can get.

In fact, the only thing this recording has going for it is its brevity. Throughout the course of four songs, Eisley aims for a kind of light mysticism, punctuated by vocal harmonies and atmospheric arrangements. However, their attempts at transcendence end up making them entirely forgettable, and their uninspired

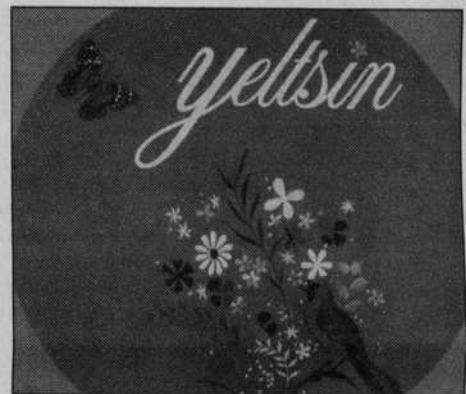
melodies and bland instrumentation aren't much help either.

Eisley is such an unimportant, uninteresting group that I almost feel bad knocking them. Almost, but not quite. Their music sounds like the soundtrack for a show on The WB, and it will be a sad day for our already weary and bruised culture if they ever make it to the big time and garner some radio play.

A band that does inspire me with some confidence in our musical future is Yeltsin. With their self-titled EP, they are able to do everything that Eisley fails to accomplish: capture the mood of a particular style and play it as well as possible. In this case the style is independent rock, which is about as indefinable a label as is imaginable. But if it can be said that modern indie rock has a sound, then this is it.

This is music that feels almost custom-made for college radio. I'm not sure if that sounds good or bad, but I mean it in the best possible way. There are musical reference points scattered throughout—a little Jesus and Mary Chain here, a bit of Pixies there—making the songs sound like someone else, just not anyone in particular.

The 17 short minutes of music on this EP feels like a polished, pristine version of every



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good demo I've heard this past year. It's like a distillation of all that is worthwhile in modern musical trends. If I sound like I'm fawning, it's because really good music is rare and hearing it from a band based in Eugene is always reason for celebration.

So while the EP may never come around as a true artistic style, it will always be an excellent bearer of the short, sweet bliss of great pop music. Yeltsin plays Saturday at Luckey's Cigar Club, located at 933 Olive St. Contact the club at 687-4643 for showtime and ticket info.

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