

MC Eyedea, DJ Abilities reunite for 'E&A'

Fans of the rapper Eyedea and his record-spinning pal Abilities can check out the duo Saturday at WOW Hall

By Ryan Murphey
Freelance Reporter

There are few things more disappointing than a poor follow-up to an excellent album, especially when you have to wait a long time for it. In a perfect world, Weezer's "Green Album" would have never existed, Misfits would have broken up when Glenn Danzig quit and Alice Cooper would have died of an overdose long before having the chance to reinvent himself.

CD REVIEW

"First Born," the 2001 collaboration between MC Eyedea and DJ Abilities, caused quite a stir in the hip-hop community and left a lot of listeners eager to hear what was next. Fans of "First Born" will be pleased to find that the latest album from the childhood friends — who release their collaborations under the "Eyedea & Abilities" moniker 'E&A,' is far from disappointing.

To say that "E&A" is a progression would be an understatement. When Eyedea & Abilities released "First Born," the two "battle-rap" heavyweights surprised listeners with an album that was far more studio than street. "E&A" takes the two musicians even further away from their battle-rap beginnings, aiming at the kind of uncompromising mainstream success achieved by bands like Outkast and Radiohead.

The symbiotic relationship between DJ Abilities' devastatingly

technical scratching and Eyedea's lyrical acrobatics is reminiscent of the call-and-response solos of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Following every step of Abilities' moody beats, Eyedea's flow varies from a lazy drawl to a frantic pace — enough to make an experienced auctioneer's head spin.

Like label mates Atmosphere and Sage Francis, Eyedea & Abilities are part of a new era in hip-hop that is becoming increasingly visible to the mainstream. Despite the growing attention, Eyedea & Abilities' commitment to the avant-garde is clear. In "Reintroducing," the appropriately titled first track of "E&A," Eyedea lyrically draws a line in the sand between himself and the mainstream, letting a little of his battle-rap cockiness shine through.

"Your candy-coated, condom-flavored karaoke cover songs are no longer accepted, so I suggest you

exit," spits Eyedea, denouncing the marginalized hip-hop culture that dominates the mainstream today. This album not only delivers something new, but demands other artists do so as well.

As an emerging white lyricist, it has been impossible for Eyedea to escape comparisons to Eminem, but after listening to "E&A," it's clear that if the two were to go head-to-head, Eyedea would send Slim back to 8 Mile in a body bag.

Eyedea & Abilities will perform at WOW Hall Saturday with Blueprint, Grayskul and Sapient. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$14 at the door, and are available at CD & Game Exchange, CD World, Face the Music, House of Records, Taco Loco, the UO Ticket Office and WOW Hall. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. and the show begins at 9 p.m.

Ryan Murphey is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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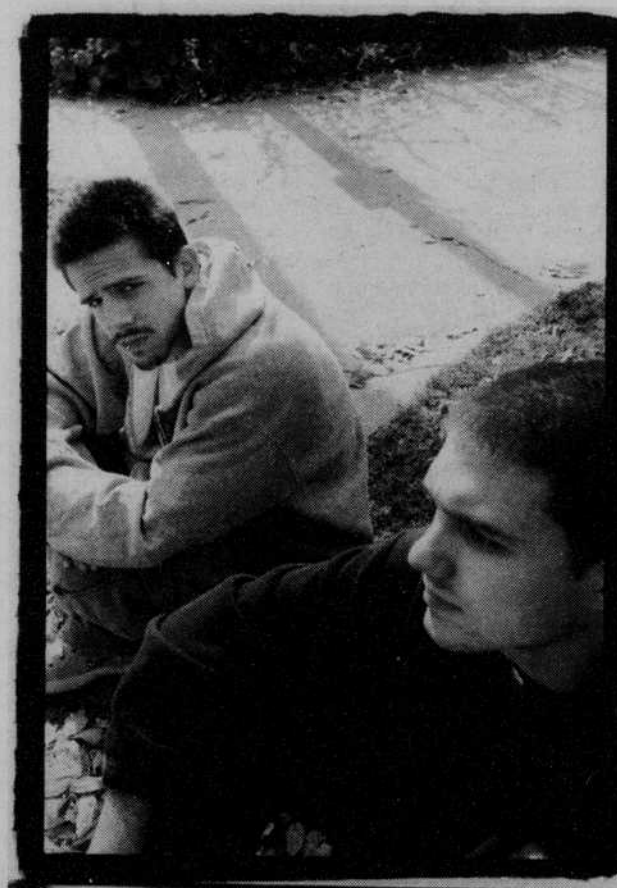
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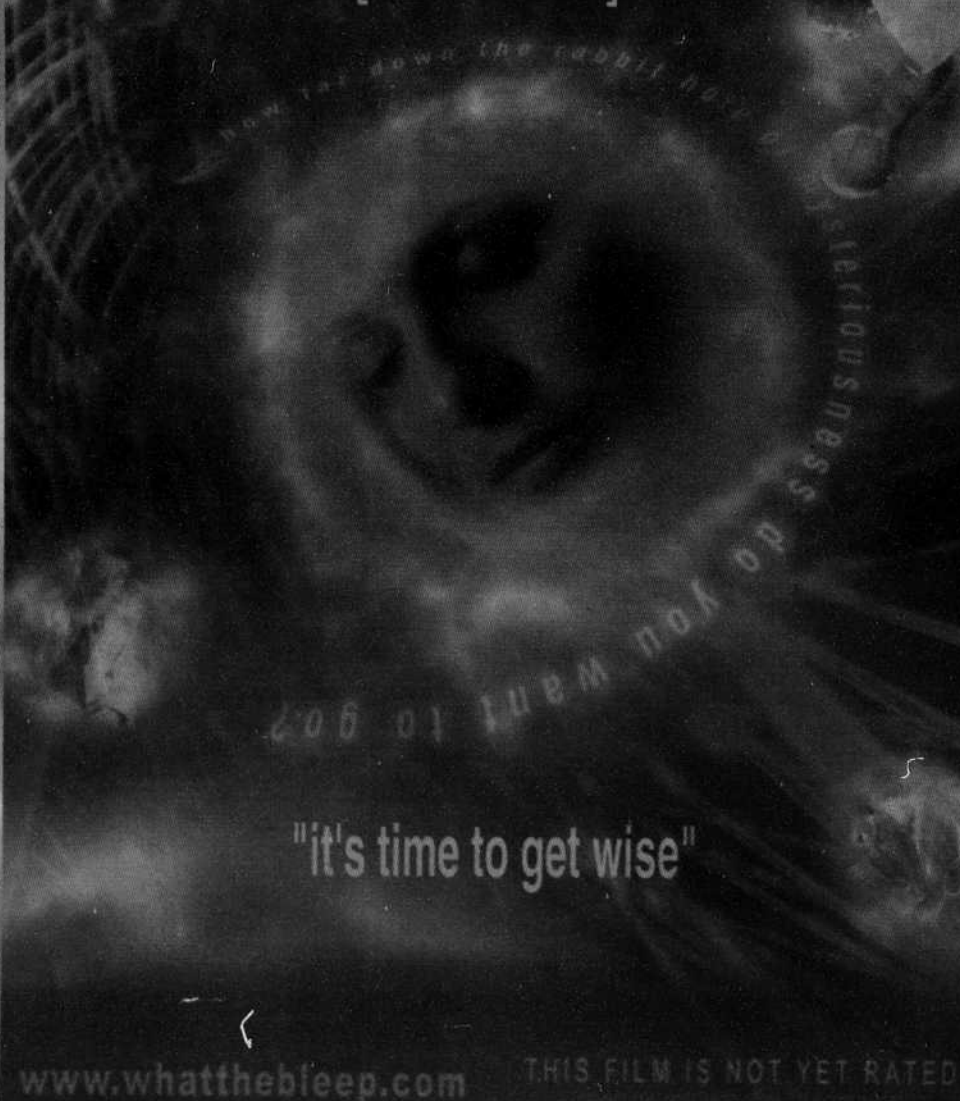
Mike Averill and Max Keltgen will perform Saturday as Eyedea & Abilities at WOW Hall to promote their new album, "E&A."

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