

■ CD review

Take a musical journey from pop to punk, gospel to R&B

Jimmy Eat World creates a dark feel while The Used relies on screaming vocals for its rebellious sound

BY AMY LICHTY
PULSE REPORTER

Jimmy Eat World is one of the best bands to listen to on a road trip. The pop-rock sound and creative lyrics pump travelers up for a long road ahead and the slow, mellow tracks help them chill out and relax during those winding roads. Jimmy Eat World's newest album "Futures" is worth a listen, both on and off the road.

The album begins with the upbeat, funky hit "Futures." After listening to the song just three or four times, I could already sing along. As the CD goes on, the songs are hit-and-miss. (For example, "Just Tonight" isn't a best effort, but "Drugs or Me" is a relaxing example of how wonderfully Jimmy Eat World can perform mellow songs.)

With lyrics such as, "Can we take a ride? Get out of this place while we still have time," from their song "Work," the road trips are just waiting

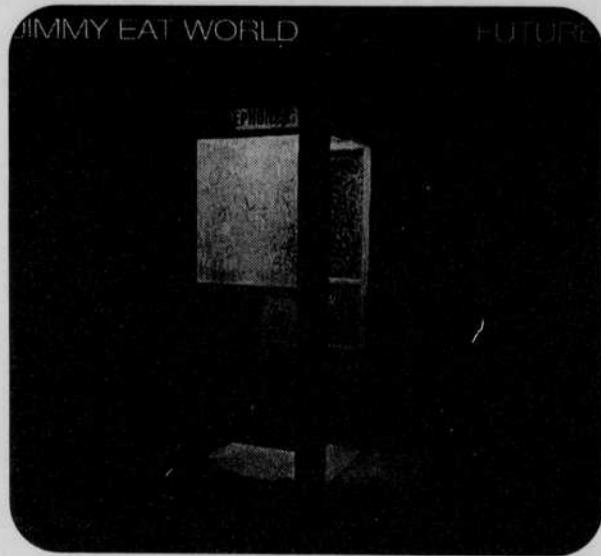
to happen. There's a blend of sounds from "Bleed American," the 2001 hit CD, and earlier "Clarity," which still remains my personal favorite. "Futures" has a darker feel than previous CDs, with drugs and addiction tending to be the topic of many of the songs. But all in all, fans should be well satisfied with Jimmy Eat World's latest (although not greatest).

Another great talent with some amazing CDs under his belt is the one-and-only Ben Harper. In his latest "There Will Be a Light," Harper is joined by the Blind Boys of Alabama. The new album features heavy gospel sounds and highly religious lyrics. Impressively, Harper wrote or co-wrote seven of the songs himself. Song titles such as "Pictures of Jesus," "Church on Time," "Mother Pray" and the title track let listeners know what they're in for. "Where Could I Go?" is classic Harper, with soulful lyrics and exquisite guitar riffs. "Church House Steps" is

another favorite, with a deep bass sound coming from the Blind Boys and an emotional Harper singing the lyrics beautifully. "There Will Be a Light" is a definite must for true Harper fans.

"Tension-filled" is how The Used describes its newest album, "In Love and Death." This 41-minute, 49-second CD is packed with rocking guitars and screaming, strained vocals. The Used sounds like it's trying to be mainstream but rebelling against the thought of it, as romantic and sweet lyrics about love get screamed at the top of lead singer Bert McCracken's lungs. The first song on the album, the terrible "Take It Away" is fortunately followed by "I Caught Fire," a catchy tune with mediocre lyrics. The entire album seems to be just that—mediocre. However, there are a couple of songs worth a second listen, such as "Lunacy Fringe." The Alternative Press called this CD "one of the most anticipated albums of 2004." If that's true, then this fell a little short.

Har Mar Superstar's "The Handler" is funny, crude, funky and smooth all at the same time. How much of that is intentional is anyone's guess. The



Jimmy Eat World's latest album, "Futures," is no masterpiece but is still a worthy addition to the band's catalogue.

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chubby and balding Har Mar Superstar sings with a strangely similar voice to Justin Timberlake and proves that he is just as talented as that pop-tart. The smooth R&B sound makes one want to get up and dance and laugh at the same time. With lyrics like "Har Mar is so sexy, he gets all the ladies. I want him to touch me

cause I want to have his babies," from the audience-participation track "Transit," listeners can't help but chuckle. Har Mar makes up for silly lyrics by having a truly fabulous voice, groovy beats and a great personality.

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■ Forgotten television

The ghost of childhood past still solves the greatest mysteries in life

Moral lessons and a diverse cast are mainstays of PBS's 'Ghostwriter'

BY DAHVI FISCHER
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"CSI" and "Law & Order" may have been up for Emmys, but in my book, nobody solved a crime like the "Ghostwriter" crew.

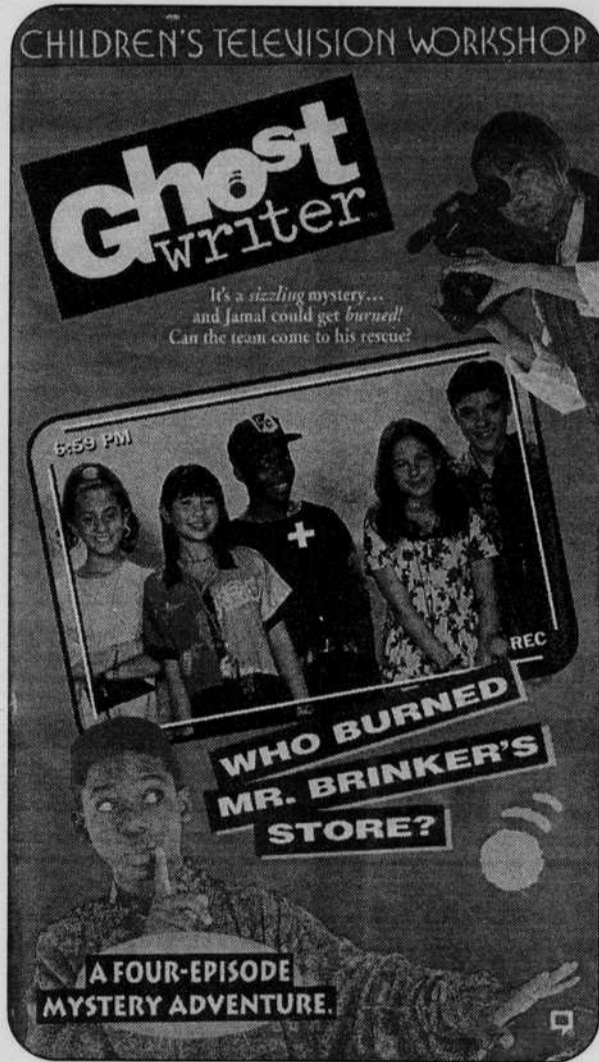
From discovering that Mr. Brinker burned down his own store to figuring out that Janice was Max Mouse, Tina, Jamal, Gaby, Alex and of course Ghostwriter itself never let anyone down with their crime-solving skills in the heart of New York City.

The other day, a friend of mine was at my apartment. We were rummaging through videos, and she came across a Ghostwriter video. We cracked up — I forgot I had taken that video with me to college, and my friend was just laughing in disbelief. We gave each other a look, and silently knew that we needed to relive our childhood for 95 minutes.

From the beginning of the show, with credits and the unforgettable theme song, to the nail-biting suspense throughout the tape, we were constantly reminded of how incredibly awesome this show was and still remains.

The show, which ran on Sundays at 6 p.m. on public television stations around the country in the early 1990s, is filled with lessons of journalism, detective work, friendship, relationships, trust and loads of other morals. One standout feature is the cast of characters — diversity is a mainstay of the show. It offers viewers a chance to learn about Tina's Asian culture, while learning about the "bodega," the Spanish name for the shop that Alex and Gaby's Mexican family owned. The show also included an African-American character, Jamal, and a Caucasian, Lennie.

For me, the word "rally" still calls to mind an image of the "Ghostwriter" team gathering to compare notes, and it takes me back to hear the



The PBS show "Ghostwriter" was a fun, campy adventure set in New York City.

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term "word" (featured prominently in the theme song) used as a cool way to say "yeah." Who can forget Calvin, the team's consistent enemy who always tried to bring the gang down?

Every show has its heartthrob, and "Ghostwriter" is no exception. "Saved By the Bell," had Zach Morris and A.C. Slater. "Ghostwriter" gave us Alejandro "Alex" Fernandez, the adorable youth played by David Lopez. The Columbia-born actor, currently 25, made young hearts swoon. Unfortunately, the actor, who attended Rutgers University in New Jersey,

hasn't graced us with his on-screen presence since his glorious "Ghostwriter" days, but I have looked him up on various Web sites and am happy to report that he has become even sexier with age.

Although the "Ghostwriter" days are nothing but a memory, it will forever live on in my mind. Sadly, I will be the first to admit that there are times when I have anxiously anticipated a little help from an omnipresent, invisible friend.

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