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In my opinion

The sound of selling out



CHUCK SLOTHOWER
TAKING ISSUE

The sweeping change that occurred in the 1960s caused many lasting impacts, such as the end of legally enforced racial segregation and the birth of widespread cynicism of government. Other relics of the '60s, such as the Harley-Davidson as a symbol of rebellion and religion through LSD, have proved less enduring.

The idea of artistic integrity among musicians belongs firmly in the latter camp. In the '60s, most musicians who wanted to be taken seriously didn't sell out. They believed it was necessary to preserve music's credibility as a medium of protest and social change.

How far we have come from that ideal was driven home to me recently, when I saw a new television ad featuring alternative-rap artist Mos Def hawking the GMC Envoy Denali, a sport utility vehicle. My heart sank. One isn't surprised to see Britney Spears shilling for Pepsi or Moby selling his music to anyone who waves a few dollars in front of his self-righteous, pseudo-intellectual, feng shui-liberal face, but when one of the primary flag bearers of alternative hip-hop sells out, it means something.

Britney Spears and the like do not pretend to have artistic credibility, so when they sell their music for commercial purposes, it's hard to consider it selling out. But Mos Def advocates revolution in his songs. His 2004 album, "The New Danger," includes the song "War," a provocative criticism of (presumably) the Iraq conflict. It begins with the line, "War is a global economic phenomenon."

Well, guess what, Mos: So is the automobile industry. When you lend your name, likeness and words to sell a vehicle that gets between 15 and 20

miles per gallon, it's a tad hypocritical to criticize a war fought at least partly over oil. When you rap about black oppression, do you envision the route to victory over racism completed in the GMC Envoy Denali? Might better ways exist for black Americans, whom GMC says it specifically targeted with the Mos Def/Envoy Denali ad, to overcome oppression than by spending \$37,565 on an Envoy Denali?

While Mos Def represents perhaps the most egregious recent sell-out in alternative music, he's hardly the only perpetrator. It's been dispiriting recently to watch good, up-and-coming bands sell out even before they hit the big time. Both Kasabian and Pinback sold their music for television ads long before most casual music fans could find the bands on their own.

Other examples of good bands selling out abound. Aerosmith has appeared in ads for Gap, among others. The Stone Temple Pilots sold its music for a car ad, an audacious act considering the band's song "Trippin' On a Hole in a Paper Heart" includes the lyric, "I'm not for sale." Other examples are too numerous to mention.

While the Stone Temple Pilots decided it most certainly was for sale, other bands have stuck to their guns. Pearl Jam never has and never will sell out. The same is true of Radiohead and Neil

Young. The Strokes and The White Stripes both reportedly turned down huge sums to sell their songs to Gap. And U2, despite the use of its song "Vertigo" in an iPod ad, has been very careful for more than 20 years about lending its music for commercial purposes. So it is possible to resist selling out.

I can hear the question in the back of your mind: What's the big deal? Fair enough; many people don't care at all when bands sell out. For them, it's a fact of modern life, like online shopping or global warming. But I see two main problems with selling out: The first is that it destroys the credibility of music as a medium for protest or social change. American music has long had a contrarian thread that runs from slave lamentations to Woody Guthrie to early rock 'n' roll to Jimi Hendrix to Dead Kennedys to Rage Against The Machine to Green Day. People like Mos Def betray not only that contrarian tradition but also themselves. Mos Def, a talented rapper with interesting things to say, now looks like a joke.

The second main problem with selling out is that it often compromises the music itself. When Moby composes an album, does he think about what his fans will like or what ad agencies will like? Given that Moby licensed every single song on his blockbuster 1999 album "Play" for commercial purposes, as VH1 reported, it's a fair question.

Music should not be regarded as mere advertising content. It's up to each contemporary musician to prove he's an artist and not just a salesman.

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INBOX

backgrounds can be hired. We particularly support the idea of "cluster" hires so that a change in the learning environment at the College of Education can occur.

Until the supply of new teachers includes more educators of color, and until new teachers of all backgrounds are culturally competent, our local districts are greatly hampered in their efforts to close the achievement gap and otherwise provide an equitable and culturally relevant education to all their students.

Carol Van Houten
Chairperson, CALC Board of Directors

University in drastic need of constructive debate

The University has fallen victim to extremist debates.

Nothing better illustrates our current anti-intellectual absolutist political atmosphere than conservative author and speaker Daniel Flynn's lecture, sponsored by the College Republicans. I attended this lecture because, frankly, I have not heard a rational political debate for a while and hoped that Flynn might shed some light into conservative politics.

He spoke about his book "Why the Left Hates America: Exposing the Lies That Have Obscured Our Nation's Greatness." Instead of talking

about some of America's problems and how conservative ideas can solve them, he illustrated America's greatness through outlandish comparisons, such as black people in this country making more money than those in Africa, and how lucky American women are to not have our genitals mutilated.

The left represented itself in a very churlish manner by jeering and interrupting the speech while Flynn, unprofessionally, answered back and egged them on.

The question and answer session turned into a pissing match between left and right. Flynn rudely evaded questions, saying to one audience member something along the lines of, "the government doesn't owe your kid brother a school lunch" and insinuating that another audience member was stupid because he didn't understand Flynn's argument. The Leftists did everything but burn his book.

I pose a challenge to the College Republicans and College Democrats. Find some political intellectuals who can have a rational and scholarly debate on America's issues. Those of us who came for an intellectual discussion don't want to throw our pearls before swine.

Sermin Yesilada
Eugene

Out loud

"It really shuts down that idea of diversity because it's not letting a group of people have a voice in a classroom setting just because of their skin color." — University senior **Melissa Hanks**, who filed a complaint May 13 with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights against the University Office of Multicultural Academic Support policy that reserves early registration into several classes for minority students.

"Our community is one of the only urban areas in the world to enjoy a park at the center of its population that is managed for natural values, and we ought to do everything we can to maintain its wild and feral nature." — Fairmount Neighborhood Association member **David Sonnichsen**, responding to a proposed Interstate 5 and Franklin Boulevard interchange.

"We're talking about atomic dimensions, the ability to manipulate atoms and molecules at that scale." — **Rich Linton**, University vice president for research and graduate studies, on the University's contribution of nanotechnology research to the Oregon Nanoscience and Microtechnologies Institute.

"Every six days, a new case of HIV is diagnosed in Lane County. You can carry the virus for 10 years and not know you have it." — **Lani Edenholtz**, an organizer of the HIV Alliance's 19th-annual River Walk and Run on Saturday.

"And when you compare anything to an ideal, it's going to fall short. ... Next to the Candy Land you've got going on in your head, America falls short." — Conservative author and speaker **Dan Flynn**, during a lecture Tuesday on his 2002 book "Why the Left Hates America: Exposing the Lies That Have Obscured Our Nation's Greatness."

"The University community is working toward a world-class arena — and that's fine — but does almost nothing about the fact that faculty salaries are at the bottom of the heap. Isn't there something grotesque about the sense of priorities?" — Professor **Michael Kellman**, who served on the University Senate Budget Committee from 1999 to 2002, on faculty pay, which is about 86.2 percent of the average salary at peer institutions.

"I have been through all those struggles, but I overcame them ... and now I'm back." — University student **Cory Mainor**, after receiving an award at the Black Women of Achievement's Ebony Man Showcase on Monday.

"We have a lot of students who are victimized by other students — who feel like the conduct process does not meet their needs. (The existing code) silences victims of violent crimes." — Director of Student Judicial Affairs **Chris Loschiavo**, discussing possible revisions to the University's Student Conduct Code.

— From Daily Emerald news reports

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