

■ In my opinion



RYAN NYBURG
BUDGET RACK

Admit it: Some new directors do good work

In my last column I lamented the fact that so much good modern music gets underrated because no one wants to admit that anything made now could be as good or better than anything made in the past. That someone might enjoy listening to Modest Mouse's "The Moon & Antarctica" more than Jimi Hendrix's "Electric Ladyland" is considered some kind of heresy, and anyone who admits to such a preference is looked at like a pop culture troglodyte.

A similar affliction is evident in the world of film. You'll often find critics, especially older critics, bashing on films for no legitimate reason other than that they disagree with their aesthetic. Wes Anderson is a frequent punching bag for this sort of criticism, his films are frequently called emotionally hollow and his style called artificial by critics who then turn around and lavish praise on derivative Hollywood faire or self-indulgent foreign works.

Roger Ebert is frequently guilty of this sort of critical double standard, as is A.O. Scott, David Edelstein and a few other big guns in the world of film criticism. What is it that intelligent younger people get that these (relatively) older critics do not? Anderson's films (excluding "Bottle Rocket," his first film, in which he hadn't completely developed as a director) are stylish without being flashy and intelligent without being condescending. "Rushmore," "The Royal Tenenbaums" and even "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou" all display a unique vision from highly skilled talent. Yet critics often mistake his subtlety for a lack of ideas and believe his aesthetic style is too artificial (the same was said of Hitchcock in his time, as if there were ever a premium put on films being realistic).

Anderson isn't the only one who gets put through the critical meat grinder despite his obvious talents. David O. Russell, Richard Linklater, Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, Jim Jarmusch and even the Coen brothers have all had to endure critical lashings despite making some of the most interesting films of the past decade. Russell's "I Heart Huckabees" was one of the cleverest comedies of the year and met with critical and popular indifference. Gondry's "Human Nature," a wickedly cynical and intelligent comedy, was either ignored or panned, only occasionally praised.

Sometimes it's easier for younger, less experienced viewers to see what the important films of the day are. The aging critical crowd of today was the youth that praised Sam Peckinpah, "Bonnie and Clyde," Jean-Luc Godard, Martin Scorsese and other films and directors now rightly considered the most important of their time. And despite often receiving acclaim from the larger critical community, many modern directors are not seen for what they are: the next crop of important filmmakers in American history. These are the visionaries that will shape what film looks like for the next few years and they are doing it right now. Yet so many critics are either blind to it or too complacent to bother pointing it out, instead lamenting about how much better things used to be. And once again we end up ignoring the present in favor of nostalgia for an imaginary past. Shame.

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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

DJ Audio Schizophrenic spins records Saturday night at John Henry's on Broadway.

A place for EVERYONE

The many different types of events at John Henry's make it a popular place for all types of Eugeneans

BY KRISTEN GERHARD
FREELANCE REPORTER

Ah, the sweet memories of undergraduate school. No matter how far removed we are from our early college days, most of us remember our dorm experiences well. After living with the folks for 18 years, we were all revved up and ready to be set free in the fraternity houses, bars and crowded basements our dormitory neighbors constantly plugged as sites of the next party-of-the-year. Back then, social life hit you like a free-beer-soaked slap in the face.

Flash forward to graduate school and the cozy "comfort" of a dorm has become the responsibility — complete with utility bills — of an apartment or home. The social pool composed of men and women of similar age has become a mixed group of individuals ranging from those with established families to those with still-wet ink on their bachelor's degrees. Money is sparse and ways to meet new people seem even sparser.

So, when asked to review a cool graduate student hang-out, I immediately felt nips of reservation munching away at my stomach lining. "Cool hang-out?!" I thought. "After only a month in town, the coolest place I've been to is Starbucks." However, once I'd gotten over my bout of self pity, I did what any good journalist would do: asked the experts.

Among the seasoned graduate students, the most-talked-about venue was John Henry's — a mix of dimly lit concert hall and warehouse-style bar, located about two miles from campus at 77 W. Broadway in downtown Eugene. This locale is still fairly new for the almost 13-year-old business, which moved there from its original location on West 11th Avenue two and a half years ago.

The brightly colored red and blue exterior of John Henry's is impossible to miss. When customers approach, the aesthetic aspect that most notice first is the mass of event fliers that enshroud the bar's street-facing window, a testament to the most appealing feature this

venue has to offer: variety.

Keith Martin, who co-owns the bar with his brother Mark, said the sort of space they have tried to create at John Henry's is simply one that is accessible to all people. The bar not only offers dance nights with DJs, but a variety of live concerts as well. According to Martin, they try to feature entertainment for just about everyone.

"If you don't like to dance, we have four shows a week," Martin said. "And that's the thing really; it changes every week. We've got people who will come down four to five times a week just because they're live music fans."

In booking the talent for John Henry's eclectic concert line-up, Martin said they try to get at least one to two national touring acts each month. However, the bar also does well at giving local and lesser-known artists a chance to showcase their work.

"We're not trying to be different, but we take a lot of chances on stuff," Martin said, mentioning that they recently featured a Hasidic Jewish reggae/hip hop artist named Modest Yahoo. While the combination of genres seemed a bit strange at first, Martin said a great crowd turned out and the performer put on an excellent show.

Most fans of John Henry's bar, however, say you haven't experienced Eugene until you've been to one of the venue's theme nights. The bar offers a "Reggae vs. Hip Hop" night on Wednesdays, "Freaks in the House," a dance/techno night, on Saturdays and a Burlesque variety show on Sundays. According to Martin, the Burlesque night — complete with scantily clad female dancers and featuring a range of performers from jugglers to stand-up comedians to musicians — is always entertaining. And over the past spring and summer months, Martin said Wednesday's musical mix of urban and island flavors has been bringing in a constantly growing crowd.

However, the most popular theme nights is, by and large, the one that flashes bar-goers back to the '80s.

If you're interested in viewing a good cross-section of Eugene folk —

local residents and college students alike — visit '80s night at John Henry's, Martin said.

"John Henry's on '80s night is filled with energy," doctoral student Hillary Lake said. "There is dancing to great music and a ton of people of all ages and backgrounds show up."

The bar is always packed on this most popular of theme nights and many patrons come decked out in Izod polo shirts or other classic attire from the era of Journey, the Bangles and Cutting Crew.

Graduate student Emma Zaratian said the bar's tiered seating makes for prime people-watching on '80s night.

"It's cool because you can look out and watch people dancing," she said. "And I don't really dance to that type of music, but you can definitely sing along to it."

Zaratian said her favorite thing about John Henry's is the bartenders.

"They're just really colorful characters," she said. "Like, there's this one chick who calls ya honey."

As far as the tastiest beverages go, Martin said your best bet is to ask for individual specialties; each bartender has about five. He also said John Henry's price range is one of the more reasonable in town, a definite plus for the cobwebbed wallets of most graduate students. Martin said the bar also tries to have a few free shows each month, and the modest cover charged for other shows essentially goes directly to the artists.

Remember, you're in graduate school now and there's no easily accessible dorm-mate to accompany you lovingly and drunkenly into your new social life.

"If you want to break into the 'scene,' go to as many functions as you can, either through your own department or sponsored by the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation," Lake advised. "It's fun to hang out and let some of the stress of grad school go, even if it is for only a short time."

John Henry's hours of operation are 9 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., Monday through Sunday, but Martin said the bar has begun offering some early shows, for which the doors open around 7 p.m.

For a complete listing of upcoming events, including opening times and cover charges, check out the John Henry's Web site at www.johnhenryclub.com.

EVENTS MOVIES BOOKS MUSIC

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Thursday
'80s Night
John Henry's
10 p.m., \$3
Dancing to '80s music

Friday
Mr. Bill's Traveling
Trivia Show
Eugene City Brewery
8 p.m., Free
Interactive trivia game

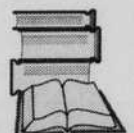
Saturday
DJ Kal-El
The Blue Luna Club
10 p.m., \$3
Reggae

Sunday
Irish Jam
Sam Bond's Garage
4-7 p.m., Free
Impromptu Irish music



TOP 5 MOVIES

- 1: "Four Brothers"
- 2: "The Skeleton Key"
- 3: "The Dukes of Hazzard"
- 4: "Wedding Crashers"
- 5: "Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo"



NEWYORKTIMES BEST-SELLERS

- 1: James Patterson, Andrew Gross, "Lifeguard"
- 2: Elizabeth Kostova, "The Historian"
- 3: Dan Brown, "The Da Vinci Code"
- 4: Terry McMillan, "The Interruption of Everything"
- 5: John Irving, "Until I Find You"



BILLBOARD TOP 5

- 1: Faith Hill, "Fireflies"
- 2: Various Artists, "Now 19"
- 3: Mariah Carey, "The Emancipation of Mimi"
- 4: Young Jeezy, "Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 101"
- 5: Teairra Mari, "Roc-A-Fella Presents Teairra Mari"