

# 'Good News' for Modest fans

**Joel Gaynor**

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Fans of Modest Mouse will be surprised but not disappointed at the maturity shown in the band's latest release, "Good News For People Who Love Bad News."

Modest Mouse, behind singer/songwriter/guitarist Isaac Brock, has amassed quite a following for its off-kilter arrangements, creative lyrics and very unorthodox vocal styling. Since its first release in 1996, the four-piece from Issaquah, Wash., has continued to mature and refine its style, steadily adding to its fan base along the way.

"Good News" is the largest evolutionary leap that Modest Mouse's sound has taken to date. In past albums, the lyrics seemed to be mostly fragmented thoughts from Brock's head put to music—an unusual formula that worked quite well. In this album, though, the ideas feel more complete, and Brock's vocals vary more from his usual style of singing unapologetically like a six-year-old (the description sounds bad, but it's a good thing—really).

At times, Brock sounds almost, well, normal. Loyal fans should not be put off by this, though. While his familiar stylistic tendencies

adorn the bulk of the music, he tones it down when it's appropriate. This makes for a strong set of songs with more variety within the album.

That variety is evident right away. After a 10-second track aptly-titled, "Horn Intro," played by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, comes the slow, string-laced, "The World at Large." This is followed by the album's first single, "Float On," and it is immediately obvious why the bouncy track was chosen as a single. The catchy melody demands humming along by the second verse and expects full-fledged singing along by the next chorus.

If "Float On" is the group's first single, the aggressive "Bury Me with It," perhaps the strongest song of them all, should definitely be the second.

The middle of the album is its only weakness. Track seven, "Dance Hall," makes for good Zumiez background music, but is boring and drones on too long.

On the contrary, track nine, "The Devil's Work Day," has at least the makings of a great song. It starts with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band repeating the CD's intro and then accompanying Brock with a banjo and sans the rest of the band, with a New Orleans feel. The lyrics, however, sound like a



Washington's own Modest Mouse doesn't mess around when it comes to the rock.

sloppy afterthought and do not work at all.

The next track, however, picks up the slack. By employing the two-and-four dance drumbeat fans have come to know well, "The View" makes the previous few tracks all but forgotten. From

there, the disc coasts seamlessly through to the finale, "The Good Times are Killing Me," which includes instrumentation and mixing by the Flaming Lips.

While "Good News for People Who Love Bad News" marks a large stylistic maturing, the album

does not suffer for it. All the elements that fans have loved—beats, the vocals, the attitude—all still there; some are just subtle than they were before others more prevalent. Evolving sound, Modest Mouse is on a trajectory that is getting better.

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## Ninja Gaiden back for revenge

Isaiah Creel  
ÜBER NERD

Tecmo's redux of the classic "Ninja Gaiden" game leaves fans with a sweet taste in their face, so grab your katana and throw on your tabbi boots, 'cause the original ninja is back in town.

It has been approximately 13 years since Tecmo released a game starring Ryu Hayabusa (that's the Ninja Gaiden's name) and the seething underground of Gaidenites has been foaming at the mouth over the release of the latest and greatest in the Ninja Saga.

Hayabusa has come a long way from his humble beginnings in the late '80s. He's acquired

a third dimension, some new weapons and even a few cinematic. His arsenal still includes such staples as the popular shuriken, windmill shuriken, the ever-present Dragon Sword and ninpo-like "fire wheel." Those geniuses at Tecmo finally provided young Hayabusa a bow and a variety of arrows, nunchaku and even a boken!

The improvements don't stop there, however, thanks to the revolutionary fighting sequences made popular by the Matrix and immortalized in the videogame world by "Prince of Persia: the Sands of Time," Hayabusa has gained the ability to run along walls, jump off enemies and roll out of the way to avoid the myriad of enemies he is forced into conflict with. There are even some puzzle elements thrown into the otherwise straightforward fast action and platform jumping craziness.

The hordes of enemies have

become the subject of much ridicule by critics and fans alike.

The sheer abundance of foes throughout the game has put off some of the less adventurous gamers, shunning the game as impossible. While there are enemies with many varying strategies and combination niques, the skeptics have failed to take into account the scope of Hayabusa's abilities—their own but for instance?

The game in general is enjoyable, and promises to have replay value ... that is, if you can complete the game on the normal difficulty setting. For great game play, sound quality and overall fun, "Ninja Gaiden" is a nine out of 10!



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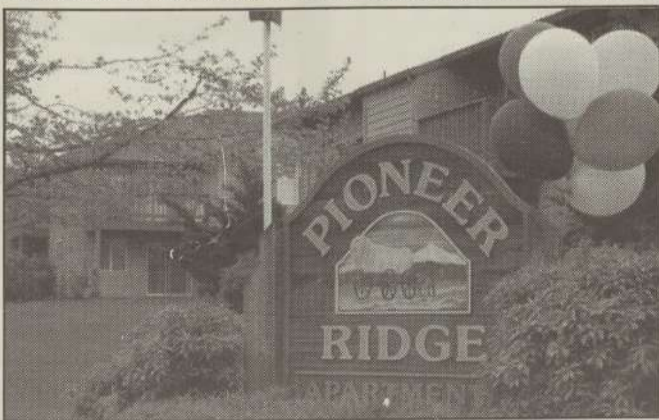
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