

When dinosaurs ruled the stage

KEVIN SMITH | STAFF WRITER

"I thought that rock was extinct, but actually it was just frozen in an iceberg to be thawed by global warming and awesomeness," said Laura Blythe-Goodman after attending the recent Saurus concert on Feb. 16 on S. Elam Street.

Saurus is a new trio that has two motives when playing — to shake the walls with prehistoric rock and to educate the audience about dinosaurs.

Saurus told the story of the Avimimus and the Deinonychus, the last two dinosaurs on Earth, by hitting the audience with loud, carnivorous lyrics like an apocalyptic meteorite. The dinosaurs were frozen on both poles of the Earth until global warming thawed them out.

The Deinonychus, mistakenly known as the velociraptor, is a menacing, killing machine that wants to rule the world. The Avimimus, Evie, is a turkey-sized, quick-legged dinosaur with a heart of gold.

The concert was complemented by a PowerPoint presentation that illustrated the storyline.

At the end of the show, the two dinosaurs duke it out, and the outcome of the conflict is up to the audience.

If the crowd cheers for the Avimimus, then the world becomes a utopia, and every problem that ever was vanishes. If the Deinonychus claims victory in the applause, then he becomes a demonic force of darkness.

At the Feb. 16 show, the Avimimus stole the crowd's

heart and took the win. Members of the band had mixed feelings about the crowd's decision.

"For the sake of humanity, I'd rather have the Avimimus win, but to be perfectly honest, I think that the Deinonychus' ending song is a lot more rocking," said lead singer and Guilford alumnus Daniel Bullard-Bates.

Aside from a story line, the band also offered the audience opportunities to answer trivia questions about dinosaurs. Blythe-Goodman was impressed by the creative fusion of turbulent music and informative dinosaur facts.

"People had to know about dinosaurs in order to answer the questions, and one person knew enough to win a book ... the juxtaposition of education and rock made the rock even better."

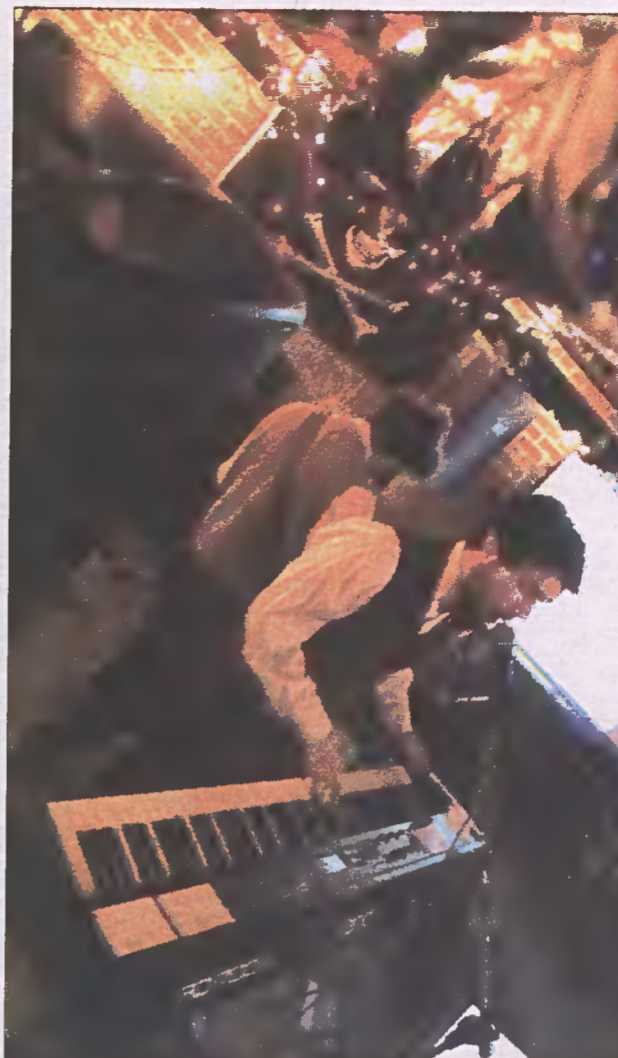
The unique sound of the band kept patrons guessing.

"I didn't know whether to associate them with the '80s or the cretaceous period," said senior Lisa Jaeggi.

Despite the highly developed dinosaur theme, Saurus was formed randomly in January.

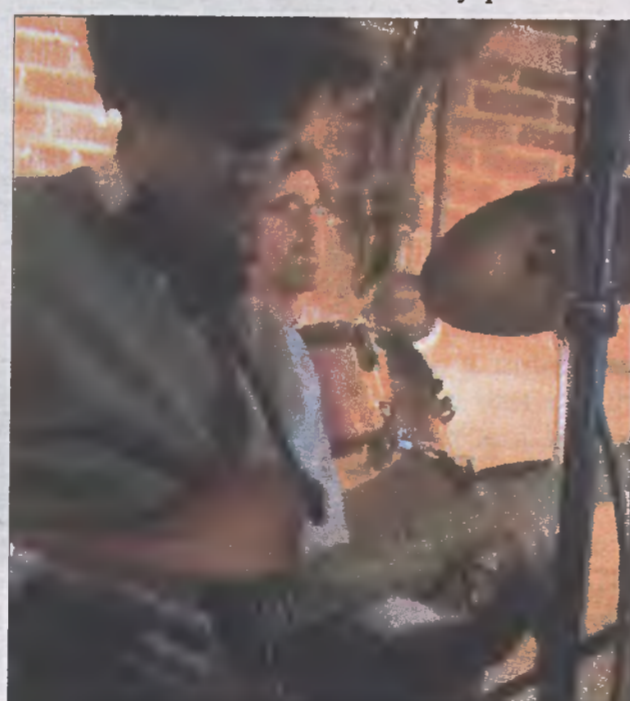
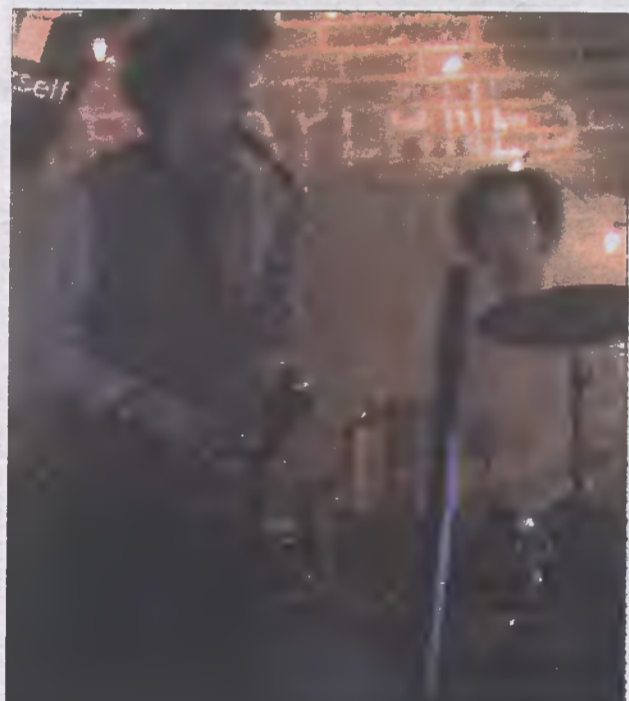
"We always wanted to be in a bad indie rock band, so one day we formed one, and it was originally called Whale," said band member and senior Andy Savoy. "At our first jam, I pulled out the only lyrics I had ever written, 'velirapirapiraptor shot my soul.' Then we were like 'why don't we sing about dinosaurs?'"

Saurus currently plans to play more shows. More information can be found at myspace.com/saurusrock.



CHARLIE CLAY/GUILFORDIAN

SAURUS BAND MEMBERS DELIVERED THE STORY OF THE ULTIMATE DINO SHOWDOWN TO A SELECT GROUP IN DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO, FRIDAY FEB. 16



"Hannibal Rising" falls short of its predecessors

BEN DEDMAN | SENIOR WRITER

When "Silence of the Lambs" was released in 1991, it brought Dr. Hannibal Lecter, then played by Anthony Hopkins, to the silver screen for a second time, after Brian Cox played Lecter (spelled Lecktor) in "Manhunter" in 1986.

"Silence" won five Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actor for Hopkins. Since then, Lecter has been considered one of the greatest film characters of all time.

Because of the greatness achieved by its predecessors, it is a pity to see what has become of the Lecter franchise in its newest installment, "Hannibal Rising."

"Hannibal Rising" was written by Thomas Harris, who has written all four books concerning the life of Hannibal Lecter, including "Hannibal Rising," which came out less than two months before its film counterpart.

Because of Harris' script, his first attempt at a screenplay, and Peter Webber's direction, his second attempt at a feature film, "Hannibal Rising" falls flat after only a few minutes, leaving the audience constantly glancing at their watches and wondering just how long it will all drag on.

The film begins with Lecter as an innocent eight-year-old child in Lithuania in the winter of 1944. Alongside his family, he is trapped in the violent eastern front of World War II.

After escaping to a small cabin in the woods, Hannibal and his younger sister, Mischa, are orphaned when a firefight between a Russian tank and a Nazi plane kills both of their parents.

Later, a group of Nazi thugs stumbles across the cabin and soon find themselves stuck with the two children and no food or escape from Soviet forces.

Mischa soon comes down

with pneumonia and, desperately hungry, the soldiers kill her, cook her and eat her, a horrific experience that transforms Lecter into a mute and violently insubordinate orphan.

The rest of the film explains how Lecter grows from this lost boy into the famous, monstrous cannibal on the prowl in Canada and searching for the men who ate his sister. He is ultimately transformed into the same thing he is out to kill — a bad guy who eats people.

The film is, in all, nothing more than decent. Peter Webber's OK direction and Harris' OK writing is combined with OK actors and an OK plot and, of course, the final product amounts to nothing better.

After Hannibal digs into his final feast of the film, an act nearly two long hours in the making, the only question I could think of was, "Why?"

Why was this movie made, and why did I pay to go see it?

Both questions have the same answer: Hannibal Lecter is one of the best and most popular movie or novel characters of the last three decades and is even ranked by Premiere magazine as the 15th greatest movie character ever.

The premise seemed promising. Just as I was duped into seeing Darth Vader's (ranked all the way back at number 84) fall to the dark side, I once again fell into the trap expecting something high-quality in return.

All I got was something decent, and soon I realized why I was really disappointed in the movie.

Instead of the elegant Chianti, liver and fava bean dinner I had expected, I was forced to settle for a mundane cheek-and-mushroom shish kabob in the woods.

The film is showing in Greensboro at the Carousel Grande on Battleground Ave. For times see www.guilfordian.com.

'Father' of Black History Month

ADRIENNE ISRAEL | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As the annual celebration of Black History Month has come to an end, it seems appropriate to focus on the life of its "father," Carter G. Woodson, who promoted Negro History week as part of his work as founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.



WOODSON

From the Coal Mines to Harvard

Born in Virginia in 1875, Woodson worked as a sharecropper and was taught to read and write at home. When his family moved to Huntington, W.Va., he went to work in the coal mines.

At age 20, he enrolled in Huntington's segregated Frederick Douglass High School. He graduated in two years and was admitted to Berea College in Kentucky where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1903, a year before Kentucky outlawed integrated education.

He returned to Huntington and taught at Douglass High School until the U.S. War Department (later renamed the State Department) offered him a teaching post in the Philippines, where he took correspondence courses in Spanish from the University of Chicago, where he formally enrolled in 1907 and earned a master's degree in European history. In 1912, he was awarded a doctorate in history from Harvard.

Promoting Scholarship

Woodson settled in Washington, D.C., where he briefly taught at segregated Dunbar High School and served as professor of history and dean of College of Liberal Arts at Howard University. In 1915, he withdrew from full-time work in higher education when he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH). Under Woodson's leadership, ASNLH published The Journal of Negro History (later renamed The Journal of African American Life and History), a scholarly journal, and The Negro History Bulletin, which is geared toward general readers.

Although his own prolific publications include both African and African-American history, his most widely read book is "The Mis-Education of the Negro" (1933), which was recently reprinted. Woodson died in 1950 at his home in Washington, D.C.