

Breathtaking Scenery Keeps 'Atlantis' Afloat

By ADRIAL DALE
Staff Writer

The legendary sunken city of Atlantis is vividly brought to life in Disney's newest animated film "Atlantis, The Lost Empire."

Milo Thatch (voiced by Michael J. Fox), a historian and the film's main character, is an Atlantis buff. Milo knows every possible tidbit of info about the place - he even knows how to read and speak their deader-than-Latin language. After Mr. Whitmore, an eccentric billionaire, calls on Milo to become the linguist for a crew soon setting sail for Atlantis, the fantastic journey begins. Breathtaking action sequences con-



★★★★☆

tribute to the overall energy of the film. In one scene the Atlantis voyager narrowly escapes the wrath of the part-lobster, part-machine leviathan vessel, which guards the entrance to Atlantis.

This entire scene pulls you into the action and has you vigorously dodging and twisting in your theater chair in a futile effort to steer the on-screen action. The amazing detail and fluidity of such action scenes allow you to disregard the fact that the figures are mere drawings and experience the action as if it were real.

Vibrant colors and texture depth as well give "Atlantis" an authentic feel, as if legend has truly come to life. Towering moss-covered monuments and waterfalls of the deepest turquoise help make the island's landscape one of the most pleasing aspects of the film.

But while in Atlantis, there are not many scenes showcasing this magnifi-

cent beauty nor is much explained about the island's civilization. There is very little exploration of the 8,800-year-old culture, something which would seemingly be near the top of any contemporary explorers' to-do list. The little that is displayed of the long-lost empire simply leaves you wanting more.

But even though the background scenery and action are sensational, the film's figure animation is reminiscent of after-school cartoons. Their choppy and blocky rendering is an unfortunate let-down that detracts from the overall quality of the film.

While the film is certainly able to entertain all age groups, "Atlantis" is targeted more toward the younger viewers. The story is very simplistic, functioning wholly to take the viewers to the submerged paradise as soon as possible with very little character development in

the interim.

With spectacular scenery, a tailor-made happy ending and the ever-present Disney charm, this movie is a good excuse to take the little ones out for a night basking in the warm glow of the silver screen.

And hey, if you're admittedly young at heart, or simply one of those older in-the-closet Disney fanatics, odds are you'll enjoy this romp through "underwater land" as well. (Don't worry, your secret should be safe with the ticket taker.)

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Despite its gorgeous background scenery, a simplistic plot and choppy figure animation make "Atlantis, The Lost Empire" a mediocre film.

Williams Takes Different Road

By RUSS LANE
Managing Editor

For someone who excels in tell-it-like-it-is storytelling, Lucinda Williams has certainly become a mystery.

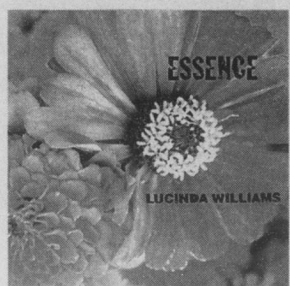
Williams follows her 1999 comeback/breakthrough, *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*, with *Essence*, a slow, tense album whose cup of spiritual imagery runneth over. But with all the album's references and metaphors, it's a little unclear whose word she's proclaiming.



★★★★☆

When she rips into "Get Right with God," which is a cross between a fundamentalist anthem and a snake-charmin', washboard-music-makin' revival, she gives both the serpents and God Almighty equal time. The CD cover booklet contains tense, voodooesque images: loudly colored grave flowers; two corpses locked in an embrace; a fence-post cross stuck in the middle of swampy farmland with "Get Right with God" written in paint.

Has Williams, whose songs have always been as Southern as sweet tea, traded the Bible Belt for the Voodoo



doll to fuel her muse?

Who knows for sure. But like Voodoo, an emotionally-charged, wildly spiritual energy pervades *Essence*. Direct and frightening in its honesty, the album wails about larger-than-life emotions - from religious devotion to sexual longing, from slow-burning anger to exhausted loneliness - in a misleadingly small-scale manner. No songs on *Essence* are like the anthem-like nature of her most famous work.

And she wants it that way. *Essence* also pits Williams against fairweather fans wanting to hear "Right in Time" or "Passionate Kisses" ad infinitum.

The good news is Williams has won that fight - she's taken a wildly different

approach to her lyrics and arrangements from the Dylan-Mitchell style on *Car Wheels*, wandering through all manner of Southern musical terrain instead.

And while it might take a while for *Car Wheels*' devotees to adjust, *Essence*'s eclecticism rewards the effort. "Bus to Baton Rouge" is a hand-to-God gospel anthem about regret; "Out of Touch" and "Are you Down," are spacey ballads that have far more in common with PJ Harvey than Dylan. "Lonely Girls," has a straight-up blues structure supported by a faintly Caribbean rhythm and Williams' long, beautifully fatigued phrasing. "Broken Butterflies" follows suit, ending the album with a haunting goodbye.

Essence's title track - and one of the best songs on this consistent album - is an ode to self-destruction disguised as a love song. Williams achingly delivers lines like "Baby/Sweet baby/Whisper my name/Shoot your love into my vein" in a manner that's more sinister than sexy, more painful than celebratory, and the band's bluesy grit only adds to the menace.

So what's it all mean? Who cares. Don't try to figure out this diverse gem - just listen and enjoy the mystery.

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Blues Traveler Crosses New Bridge

By JONATHAN MILLER
Online Editor

Blues Traveler is back. After being knocked against the ropes in 1999 with the death of founding member Bobby Sheehan and serious heart surgery for eclectic frontman/harmonica player John Popper, Blues Traveler have returned with a new lineup and a multi-layered new sound.



★★★★☆

Though Blues Traveler has featured keyboards and pianos on other studio releases, the group recruited Ben Wilson as their full time keys player prior to recording *Bridge*. The full-time addition adds an attractive new element to Blues Traveler.

Instead of forcing Popper to erupt into harmonica fury in every song, Wilson's keyboard instead takes some of the lead instrument burden from the frontman. The resulting sound is refreshingly different though somewhat familiar to previous albums. Their two lead instruments establish themselves and talk back and forth to each other from track to track as the album proceeds.

"The Way" demonstrates this dynamic. Though Popper showcases his harmonica chops in the solo, the rest of the instrumental fills are primarily the keyboard work of Wilson. The two lead musicians come together in the outro solo and their two distinct sounds weave together to bring a satisfying end to the



song.

The band's first single, "Girl Inside My Head" also showcases Wilson's keyboard talents and is absent of Popper's signature harmonica playing. Popper shares the song and music writing duties on this track with the band's other new addition, bass player Tad Kinchala.

Kinchala, brother of lead guitarist Chan, has already formed a tight low-end cohesion with drummer Brendan Hill, though this is the first recorded work from the duo. Kinchala and Hill's connection is best demonstrated in "Rage." The rhythmic team lead off the track and establish the bluesy beat that carries the song.

"All Hands" sounds like an homage to Phish, and that is not a bad thing. Clocking in at about five minutes, one of the album's longest songs, drummer Hill makes gratuitous use of his ride cymbal in Phish fashion while keys player Wilson plays dreamy keyboard fills. At any moment, it seems as though Phish lead singer Trey Anastasio will make a cameo

to sing the chorus with Popper.

Regardless, Blues Traveler may finally be heading away from the jam-band, fun-loving vibe that helped them gain popularity and instead begin to explore more intimate topics in their songs. These songs, though seemingly familiar, are hopefully a foreshadowing of the music to come from the New Jersey five-piece.

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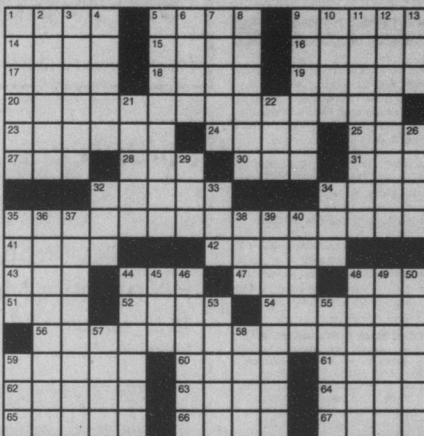
THE Daily Crossword

By Jim Page

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- ACROSS**
- 1 "Miss ___ Regrets"
 - 5 Beans
 - 9 Oregon capital
 - 14 1996 Tony winner
 - 15 Enticement
 - 16 Rubbish
 - 17 Exxon competitor
 - 18 Perched on the peak
 - 19 Dine at home
 - 20 Gets up?
 - 23 Defeats
 - 24 Actress Merrill
 - 25 Primary color
 - 27 Afore
 - 28 Lubricate
 - 30 Bunco game
 - 31 ___ Darya River
 - 32 When actors enter
 - 34 Leaning precariously
 - 35 Calls the secretary?
 - 41 Poetry collection
 - 42 Spotter
 - 43 Annex
 - 44 Disney dwarf
 - 47 Keyboard key
 - 48 Bell and Barker
 - 51 New World monkey
 - 52 As to
- DOWN**
- 1 Prophet
 - 2 Extreme panic

- 3 As a precaution
- 4 Puts away
- 5 Superior examples
- 6 Mobile starter?
- 7 Haughty
- 8 Kind of tank
- 9 Edberg of tennis
- 10 Yemeni or Saudi
- 11 Well-read intelligentia
- 12 Widely prevalent
- 13 Guys
- 21 Sierra
- 22 Lennon's love
- 26 Easily misled person
- 29 Iranian desert, Dasht-e
- 32 Lb. parts
- 33 Questioning interjections
- 34 Part of R.S.A.
- 35 Arthur and Benaderet
- 36 Making current
- 37 Of astrology
- 38 Clean-air
- watchdog grp.
- 39 Sharpener's block
- 40 Retrieve
- 44 Counted calories
- 45 Switch positions
- 46 Dies like a frog?
- 48 Sofa section
- 49 Wake-up calls?
- 50 Most cunning
- 53 Stephanie
- 54 Zimbalist's dad
- 55 VCR button
- 57 Fork-tailed flier
- 58 Take a powder
- 59 Lion's name?



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