

ZZ Top sizzles in power-packed show

Imagine this: A trio of Texas rock-and-roll thugs arises from the layers of smoke, cranks up their amps, turns on the lights and proceeds to boogie right into about 15,000 pelvises.

Not too hard to visualize, if you were out at Greensboro Coliseum Thursday night to witness the sizzling rock 'n' roll show put on by the lords of facial hair, ZZ Top.

Based on the ear-shattering performance and the just-as-loud ovations accompanying every move on stage by Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard, this was a success. The appearance of one of America's funnest bands signaled the arrival of honky-tonk time, hot orange lights and smoky nights.

ZZ Top, a band who in 16 years has gone from a Houston bar outfit to one of the major arena-packers in the industry, boomed beyond its blues-rock roots with a new synthesizer sound prevalent in its newer offerings, and the results left the crowd screaming and sweating for more. But the synthesizers had a rough-edged sound. This was no Air Supply concert. As Gibbons says of it, "Our synthesizers sound like a wrecked bombshell of a car being

LG. Roberts Concert

dragged by a tow truck."

Playing selections from their early albums, such as "Tres Hombres" and "Fandango!" — which set a longevity record for an American band by staying in the charts for 83 weeks — and their recent albums, such as "Eliminator" — more than a year in the top 20 and over 10 million sales world-wide — and "Afterburner," maestro lead guitarist Gibbons' side-of-the-pick harmonics and bluesy leads keyed the hour-and-a-half show. The concert was deceptively short due to the outpouring of energy by everyone present.

The Top, decked out in long black topcoats and white golf caps with "ZZ Top," lettered in, appropriately enough, gold script, started it off with "Under Pressure," a hit from their '83 "Eliminator" disc, then followed it up with present single "Sleeping Bag," complete with a 30-foot pharaoh in the back-

ground wearing sunglasses.

A complete listing of every tune would be unnecessary, suffice to say that Gibbons and bass-playing pal Hill, who has seemingly fully recovered from a gunshot wound to the gut last spring, played with power and passion, and Beard, the only member of the group who doesn't have a beard, typical ZZ logic, backed them up with a consistent if unspectacular drumming backbeat.

Some highlights: a wacky, offbeat light show to go along with a couple of crazy songs called "Manic Mechanic" and "Ten Foot Pole," a great extended improv jam on "Arrested For Driving While Blind," a funky, get-down dance-a-thon with "Velcro Fly" — give me just enough of that sticky stuff to hold the seams on your vinyl jeans; the band bringing out their famous furry MTV guitars to do a version of "Legs," a great laser show; and the classic early tunes that brought them into national prominence, "LaGrange" and "Tush," to finish off the show.

Even if someone didn't like the Top's tunes, it would have been worth the price of admission just to check out the diverse and constantly-entertaining

crowd which came to see the show. There were 50-year-old, toothless motorcycle mamas, MTV yuppies with their crude girlfriends, leathery red-necks on acid and a veritable throng of young spandex-clad nymphettes loaded to the gills with rouge, mascara and suggestive leers.

The crowd was put to sleep by an opening act of nauseatingly normal rock 'n' rollers who played a bunch of boring tunes and deserve no further comment. What was their name?

But there was no question that this night belonged to ZZ and the searing persona of Gibbons, who tore across the stage playing his usual excellent technical guitar — the late Jim Hendrix once came on "The Tonight Show" and called Gibbons the most promising young guitar player in America.

It was hot, and sweaty and fun. Just plain, get-down, rock 'n' roll fun. Gibbons once said, "We're not attempting to deliver any sociological breakthrough other than, 'have a good time.'"

Well, from the looks of things Thursday night, they succeeded at that with flying colors.

'Money Pit' shallow, poorly written plot

Mark Mattox Cinema

"The Money Pit," the latest in a series of '80s movies obsessed with people getting money, losing money and getting more money, is a disappointing waste of whatever talents stars Tom Hanks and Shelley Long may have.

The new comedy concerns itself with poverty-stricken, New York entertainment lawyer Walter Fielding and his violin-playing lover Anna Crowley. The two must find a new home after Anna's former husband, Max (Alexander Godunov) returns from Europe to conduct the orchestra.

Walter's rotund and not-so-honest real estate broker directs him to a mansion which is an hour from the city, up for sale and going for a suspiciously low price.

Maureen Stapleton, in a cameo appearance, plays the drunken, money-desperate, current house owner, whose Nazi criminal husband has been discovered and taken away by Israeli intelligence.

Walter and Anna fall in love with the palatial estate, which is in need of a "few repairs." Borrowing heavily from Max and a haughty, cigarette-smoking, child star, they make the purchase and begin to set up house.

As the movie continues, they discover more problems with the house, and each other, and fall deeper into debt, creating the money pit. Unfortunately, the movie does more than roll; it drags ad infinitum. Had the gags been condensed into a 10-minute short, the flick might have been more successful; instead the jokes are few and far between and too predictable.

The major antagonists — Max and a terrifying crew of repairmen — are not consistent throughout. In the face of absurdity, the few serious scenes do not really work and seem thrown in only to finish the movie, giving it a shallow blandness.

Had the climax held a stronger bite, this B comedy might have been worthwhile. Instead its only function might be to cure chronic insomnia. Try again Universal, this movie about money will probably not bring much of it to the box office. In a word, it's the pits.

Low-budget jet-setters save on ticket resells

By RICK BEASLEY
Staff Writer

New travel services that buy unsold tickets from airlines, hotels and cruise lines at cut rate prices and resell them to members are becoming popular way to go for budget-minded travelers.

Discount Travel International, one such company, offers such tickets to

club members for an annual fee. To find out what trips are available, members call a toll-free phone number and listen to a recording of the company's offerings. If they find something they like, members call the company office, send payment, and wait for their reservations. The company lists trips almost up to departure time.

Since reservations are seldom more than a month in advance, the discount travel member has to be ready to travel on short notice.

One problem with discount travel companies is that really cheap trips don't have many unsold tickets unless they are scheduled for a time that is inconvenient for everyone. So the ticket companies are usually limited to reduced prices on more expensive vacations or very cheap, very inconvenient travels.

Membership requirements change from company to company and month to month, as they run many specials.

Discount Travel International offers one particularly good deal that allows the member \$25 off on his first trip, and his year's membership doesn't begin until he takes it. Family membership with Discount Travel International is \$40 per year. Also included is a \$100 guarantee that reservations are actually cheaper.

Even with all the stress on savings, the traveling member has all the privileges and treatment of other passengers who paid full fare.

Refunds from discount agents are harder to get than through regular travel agents. A club member who has to change his reservations will probably get no refund unless he can find another

member who will take the trip.

Discount companies usually sell the cheapest tickets for the trips they list, and often the savings are considerable. Most trips include deluxe accommodations and other amenities that the budget traveler usually does not want to pay for.

Discount travel companies are not members of the American Society of Travel Agents and many travel agents think that discount agencies are "shady."

"It's legal or they couldn't be doing it, but I would carefully check into it before joining," advised Becky Austin, an agent with Small World Travel Agency on Franklin Street.

"I would be skeptical and check their prices before spending any money," she said. The test is in the price of their fares, according to Austin.

Presentation introduces newcomers to Chapel Hill

By MIKE GUNZENHAUSER
Staff Writer

To acquaint Chapel Hill newcomers with the University, UNC Director of Alumni Affairs Douglas Dibbert presented "On the Road to Chapel Hill" to about 35 newcomers Wednesday night at the Horace Williams house.

The new residents are members of the Welcome Wagon Newcomers Association of Chapel Hill and Carrboro. The association has about 350 members, all who have lived in the area less than three years, said the group's president, Mary Kistler.

Most of the newcomers are employees of the University and local businesses. Other new residents are retirees attracted to the town's atmosphere.

The half-hour slide presentation featured recorded narration and commentary by CBS newsmen and 1955 UNC graduate Charles Kuralt.

The presentation featured stories about some of UNC's historic monuments and buildings, including Kuralt's favorite building, PlayMakers Theatre. Kuralt's anecdotes included one

about Thomas Wolfe, who is said to have turned in a composition on toilet paper to a certain Dr. Greenlaw, who used the paper for what it was originally intended and then flushed it.

Kuralt reflected on how the University's "big dreams" were accomplished with "small budgets," such as the schools of public health, nursing and journalism.

UNC had greatly enlarged since his graduation, Kuralt said, when his class consisted of 100 all male students. Despite the increase in size, Chapel Hill has maintained its small town spirit, he said.

Background music for the presentation included "Goin' Home" and "Carolina On My Mind."

The General Alumni Association uses the presentation to encourage alumni to join the association, Dibbert said. The presentation has won a national award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, he said.

Alumni highlighted in the presentation were former Gov. James B. Hunt, former Sen. Sam Ervin, Andy Griffith and Steve Streater.

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