

## N.C. mountains offer more than fall foliage to westward travelers

By LESLEY BARTLETT  
Staff Writer

Fall Break just didn't last long enough, and you're already itching to get out of this town, away from the pending midterm crunch. ROADTRIP! As autumn falls across our lovely state, thousands will head for the mountains to catch the colors of the changing leaves at their peak.

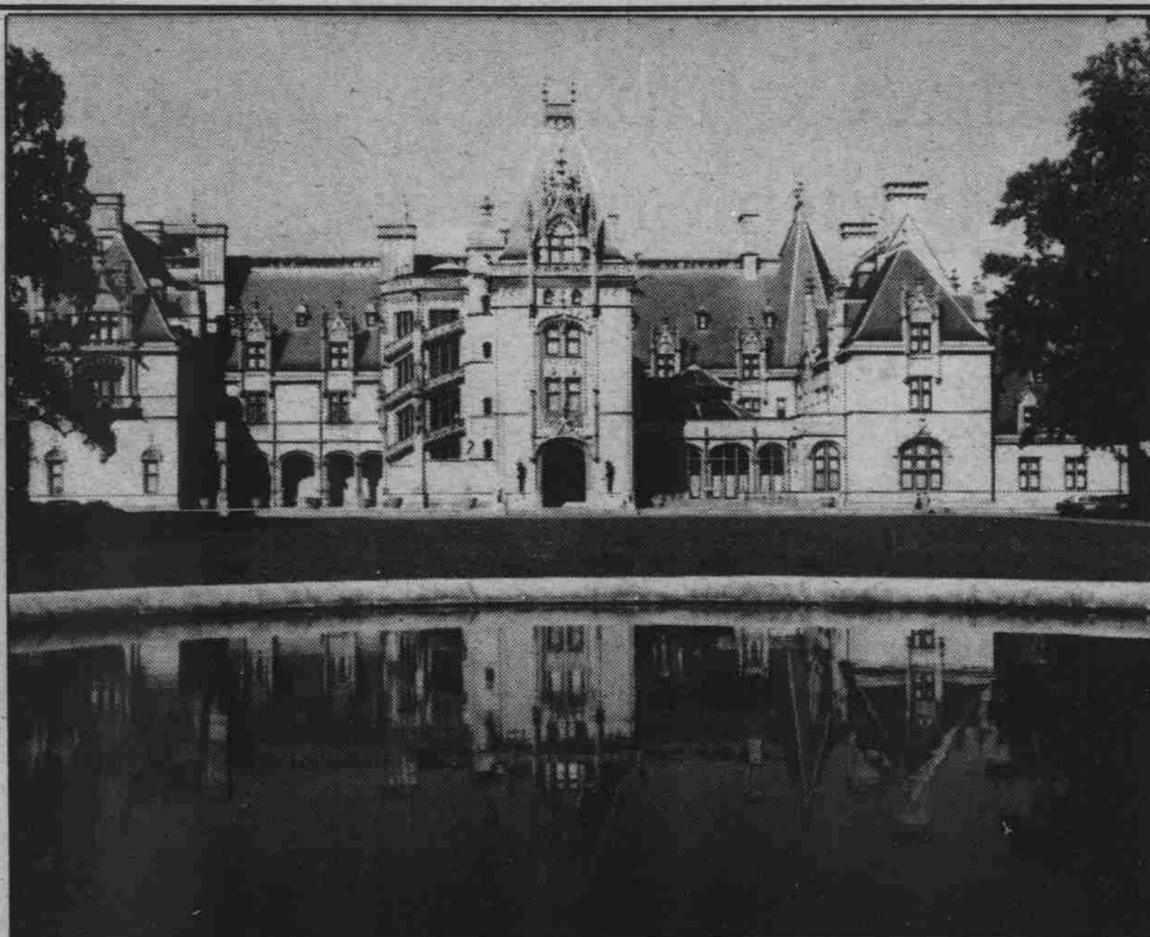
If you'd like more to look forward to than just some trees, just a few (well, 200) miles away in Asheville lies a mansion worthy of the best of aspiring royalties. Humbly titled the Biltmore House and Gardens, the 250-room Victorian castle, which Richard Morris Hunt designed for George Vanderbilt, is filled with paintings and sculpture from around the world. One thousand workers labored for five years before the construction was finally completed, and the home was opened on Christmas Eve, 1895.

And Christmas is one of the best times of the year to visit the estate. Against the backdrop of

hundreds of poinsettias and pine trees, local groups perform symphonic and vocal music. In addition, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights during the holiday season (which lasts from Nov. 25 to Dec. 31), the house sponsors Candlelight Evenings — virtually the entire estate is illuminated by candlelight, a truly beautiful sight.

Surrounding the Biltmore House is a renowned English walled garden, as well as a conservatory and a greenhouse. In addition, the estate includes acres of rolling lawns and originally featured a deer preserve.

Built around a garden courtyard on the former deer preserve is Deerpark Restaurant, which serves European and American cuisine. Deerpark is open March through December. But the Stable Cafe, which features salads and deli sandwiches, is open year-round from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Also, be sure to visit the Biltmore Winery, where you can take a self-guided tour of the production area and of the cellar. At the end of the



Vanderbilt's Biltmore House: "Just a little country house in the mountains, right dear?"

tour everyone is invited to join in a wine-tasting to sample the variety of wines available.

To get to the Biltmore House, take exit 50B off Interstate 40 west and follow the signs through

two stoplights. The house is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day, and tickets are \$17.50.

While in Asheville, be sure to

check out the Thomas Wolfe house as well, which is the actual boarding house he wrote of in "Look Homeward, Angel."

There's much more to Western North Carolina than pretty leaves.

## Sleaze-master Rapeman provides soundtrack to life

By RANDAL BULLOCK  
Staff Writer

Pull up a chair and settle back, gentlefolks, because there is a tale that needs telling. A tale of courage, a tale of hope and moreover, a tale of sleaze. I want to show you what happens when raw guts meet up with raw brains, stuck to the wall. I want to show you humankind, slung out for your perusal. This is the story of a skinny white boy's search for a human drummer, and what he found on the way. This is the story of — RAPEMAN.

### Budd — Rapeman

The saga starts out in the dark ages, when men were men and Coke machines didn't talk; a time before anyone ever uttered the ugly words "media event." This is before Sique Sique Sputnik, before ALF, before Circus of the Stars, even. It is the story of a young boy living in a time before soundtrack albums were the only proof we had that a media event actually happened. We were the world back then, and we were even the children, but these days, it takes a double studio gonzo album to remind us.

But I was telling a saga, wasn't I? A saga about a boy named Steve Albini. A skinny boy, and a white one. A veritable "geek among geeks." Yet there is something noble about this geek and his quest for a human drummer. The story (saga, I mean) starts out many years ago, with a band called Big

Black, whose style, largely reliant on Roland the drum machine was heavy enough to be considered the apex of quality sleaze at the time.

For those of you who did not partake in Big Black's seven-year hammer party, a bit of description is in order. Combining a disrespect for authority, a sensitive eye for detail, a musical style that peels paint on contact and the perfect quantity of snot (the magic ingredient to all successful social commentary music), Big Black brought a different wrinkle to the American underground music experience.

Steve and friends did not generate their own sleaze, like the sleaze-meisters of today; they merely looked around them and described the sleaze they saw. Common everyday wretchedness. The normal pus that oozes from Middle America on any given Thursday. The kinds of things people try to hide, but you always see on the 11 o'clock news after the stench gets bad enough that the neighbors notice. That was Big Black.

And so the saga turns to Rapeman, Steve's new band, and the new EP, *Budd*. The record is named after R. Budd Dwyer, Pennsylvania treasurer-embezzler who made a name for himself on national television by making the back of his head an option with the business end of a .38 while the came-

ras rolled, capturing every detail for hungry Americans. A definite media event.

And so, like Live Aid, this event needs a soundtrack to prove that it actually happened. Enter Steve. After so many years with Big Black, he has made showing human frailty to other humans a sincere art form. Our boy Budd decided to cut out the middle-man by showing his frailties to the public directly, but that does not daunt young Steve.

All public suicide cases should have it so good. On this record's four tunes, Steve shows again what made Big Black so special,

mainly by doing almost exactly the same thing.

Records that hit this hard need a special license just to show up on vinyl. The bass is rock hard and could easily rip a cone in your speaker. The guitar... well, Steve is the guitarist and this is his saga. You don't get your own saga unless you can play some mean guitar.

But anyway, the drums. Aaah, the grail. The end of the quest. That which has eluded Steve all these long years. Steve looked long and hard but he had to wait for Scratch Acid to break up before he could find a drummer

that was manic enough to serve the purpose. Yet the funny thing is, he sounds just like Roland, preserving that ever-so-special Big Black sound. Is this a coincidence?

Perhaps not. Maybe I lied. Maybe there was no quest at all. Maybe Steve liked the sound he got from Roland and didn't want anything different. Maybe I made this all up just because I knew people like a good epic now and again and not because any of it actually happened that way. Maybe. I guess we'll just have to wait for the soundtrack album to find out. In the meanwhile, buy this. Budd would have wanted it that way.



## Cum Laude Calabash.

Our chefs are better by degrees.


**LANDLUBBER'S**  
 SEAFOOD RESTAURANT  
 The cookin's timed in seconds.

Hwy. 54 at I-40 493-8096-967-8227