

FEATURES

Classic rock opera still a hit

BY KERRIN SMITH
Staff Reporter

The Who's rock opera, "Tommy," entertained audiences at the Diana Wortham Theatre in downtown Asheville April 8 through 10.

"I loved the show," said Lela Stephens, a UNCA alumna. "The acting was good and the music was great."

"Tommy" comes from the imagination of the rock band The Who. The rock opera tells the story of a young boy, Tommy, who viewed a tragic event at the hands of his parents. They tell him never to tell about the unfortunate happening he witnessed making him deaf, mute, blind and non-responsive to any feeling whatsoever.

review

Tommy goes through his childhood with everyone wondering how he fell victim to these medical conditions. He frequents different types of doctors who may have a chance of curing him, but none of the specialists can make sense of his condition.

As he grows into his teens, his cousin, Kevin, takes him to an arcade and places him in front of a pinball machine for a laugh. Surprisingly, Tommy plays the game extremely well. In awe of this feat, people crowd around to see the boy play.

Tommy's mother, Mrs. Walker, becomes frustrated with him because his medical conditions are becoming a strain on the family. She does not understand the problems Tommy has, or in what they are rooted.

Mrs. Walker breaks a mirror in which Tommy frequently gazes with intensity. The destruction of the mirror releases Tommy's childhood pain and he becomes able to see, hear, speak and feel again.

He receives a lot of attention due to this miracle he experiences. The family is surrounded by new people and journalists interested in hearing Tommy's story. His parents become upset Tommy forgot they were there for him during his hard times.

The performance was very attention-grabbing and energetic. The music was fantastic. The singing voices of the cast members were low in volume and a little hard to understand at times. Overall, the large cast was very talented.

Three different actors played Tommy at the different stages of his life. Jacob Fraize played Tommy at the age of four. The young boy was amazing. His vibrant energy was seen onstage throughout the performance.

Patrick Cassidy played Tommy at 10. Charles Pittman played full-grown Tommy very well. His strong voice made him stand out amid a talented cast. Observing from an area above the stage, Pittman also served as the narrator.

Mrs. Walker, played by Katie Kasben, was a standout among the females of the cast. There was a sense of serenity in the scenes in which she was present. Her full voice blended well with the rest of the casts'.

Cousin Kevin, played by Stiles Cummings, had a strong voice that was a standout in the show. His abilities were amazing. He brought an extra burst of energy to the stage with his voice and movement.

"Cousin Kevin was one of my favorite characters. He stole the spotlight," said Stephens. "I could understand all the lyrics in his songs, where there were many other characters that I could not understand. His voice was so full and powerful. He seemed to bring something extra to the stage."

Cummings said that he was excited about the show as soon as he heard about the production.

"Backstage before the show I had so much energy," said Cummings. "I was running up to other cast members, almost shaking with so much energy and all they could do was soak up some of my energy

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Death Cab for Cutie plays on despite audio issues

BY DEARBORN MCCORKLE
Advertising Manager

Death Cab for Cutie, one of college Indie Rock's prized gems, performed to a near sold-out crowd at The Orange Peel April 18.

Hipsters sporting thrift store threads, horn-rimmed glasses and hair styles that would give Starsky and Hutch a run for their money filled "The Social Aid and Pleasure Club" close to capacity for Death Cab's much anticipated "Transatlanticism Tour."

Good friends and fellow Indie mates, Pedro the Lion, opened the show with their toned down, no-nonsense style gliding easily from one song into the next. Unfamiliar with Pedro's work, dying from the lack of air-conditioning and, quite frankly, depressed from the crowd's lack of energy, it proved difficult to get into the often slow, groove rock the band is known for.

Pedro dedicated the first half of their performance to songs from their previous albums, each sounding to the "untrained ear" almost identical to the next. Lead singer, David Bazan, then took

time to conduct his apparently famous, and honestly rather dorky, Q&A session with the crowd and to announce the upcoming release of the band's newest album "Achilles Heel," which



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEARBORN MCCORKLE

Though technical difficulties with sound frustrated the band and fans, Death Cab for Cutie continued to give an energetic performance of Indie Rock.

is set to hit music stores May 25.

The band's stop in Asheville marked one of the 18 dates of their pre-release tour and offered the chance for fans to buy the new album in advance.

review

With people still packing into the increasingly crowded club, Death Cab for Cutie took the stage. Death Cab opened the

show with high energy, yet difficulty with the sound system made the lyrics impossible to hear and the music lopsided and bass heavy.

The band played crowd favor-

ite "We Laugh Indoors" second, but with each sibilant in Ben Gibbard's vocals, the treble screeched making the song nearly unbearable. Understandably frustrated, the band stopped playing and Gibbard asked the technician to fix the sound.

The sound technician attempted to fix the problems quickly while Gibbard began to banter the him. Gibbard's attitude proceeded to decline, and he became quite rude in his comments to the crowd about the club and its staff.

After several more songs, the technician had corrected the mi-

crophones and balance to some extent, but the overall sound quality did not do justice to Death Cab's skillful execution of the songs. However, the cocky and discourteous manner in which Gibbard presented himself, unfortunately, put the remainder of the performance on a somewhat sour note.

Death Cab continued their quirky and energetic performance playing a large sampling of songs from all four of their full-length albums including "Photo Booth" from their "Forbidden Love EP," but focused largely on tracks from their Oct. 2003 release,

"Transatlanticism."

Despite the astounding within the club and rocky fans left the concert seemingly enthusiastic and pleased.

Death Cab for Cutie originated in Bellingham, Wash. Gibbard, who previously performed under the name All-Time Quarterback, recorded "You Can Play These Songs' Chords" with his friend/guitarist/keyboardist Chris Walla as a solo project.

After receiving unexpected positive response from project, the pair recruited bassist Nick Harmer and drummer Nathan Good to form a live band. Death Cab released its first album, "Something About Planes," in 1998 and quickly garnered attention by critics and consumers alike. The group immediately gained a large and growing fan base through word of mouth alone. Often compared to other Indie staples as Superchunk, Quasi and Built to Spill, Death Cab has risen to an iconic status within the college rock scene.

The group got their name from a song called "Death Cab for Cutie" on the 1967 debut album "Gorilla" by The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band. Good was replaced by Michael Schorr on drums. Recently, Schorr left Death Cab and was replaced by Jason McGerr.

They will continue on the Transatlanticism Tour through May 8 and are scheduled to play a Sept. 4 show in Bend, OR.

Tarantino returns with a vengeance

BY REBECCA DEROSA
Staff Reporter

"Kill Bill Vol. 2," which opened April 16, won't disappoint Quentin Tarantino fans and anyone who liked "Kill Bill Vol. 1."

"I think I liked the second one better," said Charla Schlueter, an undeclared freshman. "It connected more to the audience, I think, because it relates to your emotions. It also gives you more history that was lacking in the first one."

"Kill Bill Vol. 1" primarily shows action scenes without explaining the relationships of the characters in depth. The viewer wonders why the Deadly Viper Assassin Death Squad (DiVAS) kills The Bride's (Uma Thurman) wedding party and leaves her and her unborn child to die.

After The Bride wakes up from a four-year coma, she declares revenge and creates a "Death List Five" of her former colleagues. First, she vanquishes Vernita Green (Vivica A. Fox) in front of Green's daughter. Thurman's character tells her to grow up and come see her in a few years, prompting rumors of a third "Kill Bill" film. She then travels to Japan and obtains a samurai sword made by the legendary Hattori Hanzo (Sonny Chiba), after which she exacts revenge on O-Ren Ishii (Lucy Liu) and

her gang, the Crazy 88s. The anime sequences and unrealistic bloodshed become comical in typically Tarantino fashion.

"The first 'Kill Bill' was the one that really nailed it in for me, just because of the way it was done," said Crystal Ratazzi, a junior multimedia arts and sciences major. "It was different and kept you captivated. It was beautiful. It was bloody, it was violent and everything at the same time, and just pulled together everything really well."

"Kill Bill Vol. 1" ends with a surprise revelation which begs for an explanation.

The second film fills in the missing information with more character development and dialogue. It chronicles the love between Bill (David Carradine) and The Bride, both trained assassins, who don't break up easily, to say the least.

The Bride has three people left to kill: Bill, the head of the DiVAS; his brother Budd (Michael Madsen); and the one-eyed Elle Driver (Daryl Hannah). Revenge rules The Bride's body and mind as she crosses oceans and deserts to find the people she must kill.

Thurman mastered sword-play and martial arts to play the character and learned how to do flips and jumps using wires which lifted her off the ground. Those with queasy stomachs

"(The second one) is more realistic with the human emotions. They got rid of the campy violence and the spraying blood."

Charla Schlueter
undeclared freshman

review

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