

New year at Cat's Cradle: Guided By Voices

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Loyal fans packed the club New Year's Eve, some of whom flew in from as far as New York to ring in 2001. Robert Pollard of the Dayton, Ohio-based group Guided By Voices took the stage shortly after midnight announcing that the set would include songs from an upcoming concept album, which is slated to be released in April. This album is number fifteen added to the gigantic stack of previous full-lengths dating back to 1986.

The concert by Guided By Voices was part of a New Year's party at the Cat's Cradle in Carrboro. Some of the requests being shouted at the band ranged from the band's '87 release *Devil Between My Toes*, to last year's *Do the*



Guided By Voices entertains audiences during a New Year's performance.

Collapse, produced by Ric Ocasek of the Cars. Recent albums have had a higher budget treatment than earlier self-released ones, disproving the belief that they release only homemade four-track recordings.

Although their name sounds like a gospel group, they are in fact a band with a constantly changing line-up that carry out the vision of one voice, Pollard's. His fascination with late-era 60's rock often shows up in his anthemic riffs and nonsensical lyrics.

What is it that draws such a fanatical following from a city where the infamous ball drops to a small college town in North Carolina? It's the songs. The highly prolific Pollard writes song after song, often writing close to a hundred songs per album. The songs are sung as if they were strange trips through mystical lands while still maintaining a pop element. It seems as if a childhood imagination is behind the wheel of Pollard's songs.

Pollard has created his own label called The Fading Captain Series

(FCS) to release his own solo efforts. In September FCS released the hundred song, 4 CD box set *Suitcase: Failed Experiments and Trashed Aircraft*. It is comprised of all the rarity songs that never made it on the albums throughout the years, one of which dates back to 1974. GBV have broke away from the indie label status and are now onTVT Records in New York, whose roster includes Underworld and Brian Jonestown Massacre. The finished upcoming album is tentatively titled *Isolation Drills*, having been changed from the previous tag, *Broadcaster House*. The concept album idea has been used once before

on their 1989 release *Same Place The Fly Got Smashed*, about the life of an alcoholic who ends up in the electric chair for a crime he committed.

On *Isolation Drills* the chance for new songs to be fully realized and accessible to larger audiences is good. Pollard and company have enlisted Rob Schnapf, producer for such widely recognized albums as Beck's *Mellow Gold* and the first Foo Fighters album. The new songs "Glad Girls" and "Chasing Heather Crazy" are instantly catchy and well received by the Chapel Hill crowd. Elliot Smith, whose first three albums were produced by Schnapf, made a guest appearance on the new album.

"He plays keyboards on two of the cuts," guitarist Doug Gillard explains. "On 'Skillz Like This' and 'Glad Girls' the production is much more straight-forward with a better drum sound."

Another familiar guest to GBV history, Tobin Sprout stopped by the studio to lend his piano skills on the track "How's My Drinking?." His small portion of songwriting can be found on earlier albums, the most recognizable being *Bee Thousand*. Released in 1994 on Matador

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(CHECK THE YELLOW PAGES FOR MAP)

Records, it followed the highly anticipated CMJ Showcase performance in New York. This performance was praised by the likes of Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth and the Beastie Boys. Songs off of this album, such as "Tractor Rape Chain," had the new year's crowd singing along. Other favorites included "Back To Saturn X," which is a previously unreleased hit and a cover of "Baba O' Riley" featuring the vocals of Jon Wurster, drummer for Superchunk.

With the promise of a new album and stamina to make it through the night's two and a half hour set, GBV have a lot to show for their productivity in the new year.

"*Isolation Drills* means the drills done during practice to improve a sports team's performance," guitarist Nate Farley reveals, "although in this case, the isolation is meant in a broader sense."

Isolation, however, is not a tactic GBV use as a defense against their fans. On the contrary, most albums they release contain over 20 songs and often, the shows they put on clock in at the two hour mark. Those songs left off the albums just got released on Pollard's label. The band still maintains loyalty to their audience while making the decision to branch out with a more accessible new album.

EVENTS, FROM PAGE 7

and events are planned for each day. "It's All Fun and Games" as the festivities begin at 4:30 p.m. on Monday with a parade leading from Wagoner Hall to the Commons where a Pep Rally will be held. Following this will be the movie "Bring It On," which will show at 8 p.m. in Union Station. Tuesday is the "Day of Chance," which includes free games in the game room from noon until 8 p.m. and the "Think Fast Game Show" at 8 p.m. in the Warwick Center Ballroom. On Wednesday, the "Day of Dance," the Warwick Center Ballroom will host a video dance party at 8 p.m. "The Day of Romance" takes place on Thursday with UNCW's version of "Singed Out" from 7-9 pm in Union Station. "Almost Famous Friday" features the ACE Film "Almost Famous" which will show at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. in the Warwick Center Ballroom.

Game Day is Saturday. A tent party including hot air balloon rides will take place from 4-6 p.m. The Homecoming game, where the Seahawks will face William and Mary, begins at 7 p.m. Following the game, the ACE and the National Pan Hellenic Council will present the annual Step Show at 9:30 p.m. in Kenan Auditorium.

All throughout the week, students can win free prizes by visiting Union Station between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. while wearing UNCW stuff. "Singed Out" ballots can be filled out on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and students can vote for the Homecoming King and Queen on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at the Union from 5-7p.m.