

Raging Slab is bizarre but satisfying

By MARK BRETT

Review

There's something curiously satisfying about listening to Raging Slab, but I'm not quite sure what it is. Perhaps it's their sound. Imagine, if you will, a bizarre cross-breeding experiment conducted on Lynyrd Skynrd and Metallica, and the result would be something resembling Raging Slab.

Their combination of metal crunch and southern rock rhythms is intriguing to hear. If only they had been able to capture the flair for lyrics that both their parents exhibit. Unfortunately, however, Raging Slab has some of the worst lyrics since Spinal Tap, and the Slab's not trying to be funny.

Their debut album, imaginatively titled *Raging Slab*, opens with "Don't Dog Me," which is about pretty much what you'd expect from a song with that title. This song has lyrics of a sort, most of which are on a level with the following: "Bark that bark when you walk that walk/Don't hand me the halo and hot coal talk." There seems to almost be some potential there, but it's swallowed by sheer stupidity. That sort of frustration becomes maddening after a while, and Raging Slab keeps it up for quite some time.

The album continues with, "Joy Ride," a song that doesn't seem to be about much of anything. There's some stuff about the Lord in a Ford (dig that rhyme scheme!) and some other equally weighty subject matter, but

mostly this one just seems to be an excuse to play loud.

Things don't improve much on the rest of the album. Next is "Sorry's All I Got," which includes the line "I finally done you wrong right/Between your eyes I must look a damn sight. Well, at least it rhymes.

This work of genius is followed by "Waiting for the Potion," which is probably about sexual longing, but who can tell? This one opens with the line, "My heart's tickin' like a great, big clock," setting up a sort of time motif that the rest of the song tries valiently to follow. Again, there seems to be some sort of potential here, but it's lost. It just makes you want to scream.

Next is "Get Off My Jollies," where things finally get ridiculous. Check out the first verse: "Just try and shave my wooly bully/I'll just use the fur as fuel for folly/And make a flame so hot and blondie (Hot and blondie?)/ That it'll curl you straight thru Sunday." Not only does this make no sense at all, but it doesn't even rhyme! The song goes downhill from there.

From this point, things begin to run together. "Shiny Mama" seem to be about sexual organs, and that's all. "Geronimo," I think, tries hard to be about the plight of the American Indian. "Bent for Silver" uses a lot of monetary terminology in what

appears to be a sort of cheap come-on. A call for prostitution, perhaps?

Next is the group's obligatory slow song, "Love Come Loose." Here, finally, we actually get an interesting line: "When love comes loose it don't make a sound/And hearts just break when they hit the ground." Okay, so it's not Shakespeare but at least it's clever.

The next song, "Dig a Hole," actually says something interesting (a novel concept, I realize, but bear with me.) It deals with

life in the modern world, where we carelessly rush headlong into our graves. Here, the lyrics and the music finally mesh, as the song's driving beat echoes the desperate tone of the song and lead singer Gregory Strzempka urges the listener to "Dig a hole that fits you." Admittedly, most of the lyrics are of questionable quality, but they do succeed in making the point.

Though frustrating in most places, *Raging Slab* comes together in the end (well, actually the album ends with another re-

ally rotten song called "San Loco," but after "Dig a Hole" I can forgive that one.) There seemed to be something interesting happening in many places, but the lyrics were just too weak and contrived to get the point across. And, of course, the instrumental aspect of the album is quite good.

If you want to shut your mind off for a while and just enjoy a good groove, then Raging Slab is the group to do it with. And if you do want to think, they're good for a few laughs.

Gardening provides more fun in the abstract than in reality

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to mark out an area to clear, thinking, "Well, this isn't going to be so bad."

Suddenly an electric shock surged through my shovel, piercing my foot, shooting up my leg, spreading into knee and hip, paralyzing hand an elbow, and finally snapping my neck. I thumped, I shuddered, I shook, I screamed. Yes, I had hit my first pine tree root of the day.

First you hope you can cut it with the shovel's sharp edge. You aim and savagely chop. Many will break this way and the chop joins the rhythm of the cutting and sinking. But some granddaddy roots takes axes, chain saws, dynamite, divine intervention.

You begin to dread sticking the shovel into the ground for fear of hitting another root. And of course most of them travel exactly the same path you need to follow in order to finish your day's work. Your body begins to feel as if a giant hand were smacking it. The day doesn't seem so cool; the music changes to a mocking rendition of "It's a Beautiful Day."

A friend wandered by and found me lying in last year's plot. I was hiding in the wild flowers, looking up through the pine branches, wondering why I hadn't gone out to campus and let the students dunk me for Spring Fling.

"What are you doing there?" my friend asked. I looked over at the pitifully small area I had cleared and the expanse of grass still growing and matting and intertwining with pine roots.

"I'm getting in touch with nature," I sighed.

Hours later I had made painfully slow progress, after halving my estimated day's clearing. Then I met my match. This root smugly pulsated with health and strength. And it was exactly in the spot where I wanted to plant a hosta lily. I felt around with the shovel, probing for a free spot. Could this be an underground concrete monolith? Where did it end? I smashed, I chopped, I jumped up and down in frustration.

I figured wildly. Papers to grade? Classes to prepare for? A Dr. Steve column to write? What could I possibly have thought I was doing? At least mowing had an end. But, wait, wouldn't that hosta look as good over there; couldn't I take a hint and dig elsewhere? I plunged my shovel into

the softest, blackest earth I could find and planted my lily.

I unceremoniously dumped my tools back into the garage, ignoring my carefully established proper places for each tool. I soaked in a tub of steaming water. I rubbed my back. I ate supper. I walked into the back yard and dreamed of the many days of lessened mowing and heightened aesthetic appeal. I began planning my next assault on, to paraphrase T.S. Elliot, the roots that clutch, the branches that grow out of this stony rubbish.

I noticed a dark blue columbine blossom and reminded myself that a garden connects my to my father and grandparents and all those before me who believed in working a plot of land, not to control it, but to let it define and reflect and celebrate the gardener's dreams.

Campus arts slighted

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faculty's responsibility is to formulate the topic and set the program.

There is no reason why interested students shouldn't participate in this process. In fact, the committee planning next year's symposium includes both students and faculty. I'm sure there is room for more students. If you're interested, contact Dr. Barbara Perry-Sheldon, Chair of the Education Division.

Leverett T. Smith, Jr.
Coordinator,
Wesleyan Symposium

Goodbye to Wesleyan

Dear Wesleyan Community:

The time has come to say

"good-bye" to you. After a decade of teaching at NCWC, a change in employment for my husband has necessitated a change for me.

The future looms uncertain (as it always does) for no new address had been established nor has a new employer been determined. However, come September or sooner, I shall be in another part of God's bountiful country, the country of Moore.

Best wishes for each of you as you continue here or venture on to new locations as I am doing. I have enjoyed my tenure here and will continue to have an interest in Wesleyan College. God Bless.

Elaine Lytton
Assistant Prof. of Mathematics

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