

Iron and Wine captures old South in album

Jen Hildebrand
Reporter

"The Creek Drank the Cradle," the debut album from Iron and Wine, combines the low-key guitar beats of popular singer-songwriters with the mystique and values of the old South.

With song titles such as "Faded From The Winter" and "Southern Anthem," the album chronicles one man's life, incorporating his family and personal relationships with the singer's relationship with his living environment.

Iron and Wine is more commonly known as Samuel Beam, a singer-songwriter from Miami, Fla.

Possessing a gravely voice that fits the lyrics he shares with the public, Beam's stripped-down and simple music provides insight and a different view on life. The album also shows a limited range both vocally and musically.

The music is enjoyable, but though lyrically creative, it lacks the emotional depth and varied

musical tempos that have made other singer-songwriters popular.

A song that highlights Beam's perspective of life is "Promising Light," with lyrics such as "Time and all you gave/I was the jerk who preferred the sea/to tussling in the waves/tugging your skirt, singing please, please, please."

One problem with "The Creek Drank the Cradle" is the lack of variety and influences of other music genres. Due to immigration and the popularity of Miami, many artists from the area incorporate Caribbean rhythms into their music. Instead of incorporating these or other musical styles, Beam sticks to one element. With some alterations in musical style and tempo, this artist has the potential to evolve into a musical power.

Beam is touring the United States.

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Photo from SubPop
Samuel Beam

'Harvard' fails to ace at box office

Sean Hennen
Reporter

For the first 20 minutes, "Stealing Harvard" promised not to be an all-out laugh-fest, but it at least had one thing going for it, the comic perfection of actor Jason Lee.

Previously, Lee commanded a string of great movies such as Kevin Smith classics "Chasing Amy" and "Dogma," and critically-acclaimed "Almost Famous" and "Vanilla Sky." His latest movie is less than those intelligent ventures.

While Lee's performance saved the poor plot development, he could not save Tom Green's performance.

The plot is far-fetched, but lends itself well to the movie. John Plumber (Lee) has a fairly decent life. His fiancée Elaine (Leslie Mann) handled their finances well enough to save \$30,000 for a wedding and a down-payment on their first house.

He has a good job as an assistant manager of a handicap-specialty store, under the supervision of his father-in-law (Dennis



Photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Lee and Green start a string of crime in "Harvard."

Farina). Plumber is enjoying his life in quiet suburbia.

Plumber hits a glitch when a promise he made to his niece to pay for her first year of college comes back to haunt him as she is accepted to Harvard University.

She needs \$30,000 to pay tuition. Refusing to ask Elaine if he can use their savings for his niece, Plumber goes to his long-time friend Duff (Green) for help.

Duff is a polar opposite of John, an inept, under-achieving loser with a flailing landscaping business that he runs out of his van. Duff makes the suggestion

that "criminals have lots of money," and the pair proceeds to hatch a series of petty crimes to get the dough.

To make matters worse, Duff and Elaine do not get along, so Plumber is left to keep his life of crime a secret from the woman he loves.

As each plan fails more than the one before it, Elaine, her father and an overly tenacious police detective (John C. McGinley) become suspicious of Plumber's late-night antics.

Unfortunately, the best moments of "Stealing Harvard" are revealed in the trailer, and what's left is Green making a fool out of himself on camera much in the same way he did on his canceled television show. Lee, Mann and Farina all do well in their comedic roles, but Green weighs the cast and the movie down. By the time the end credits role, the 80-minute movie feels excessively longer.

Rating: Skip it and see Mike Myers in "Goldmember" again.

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DeNiro back to tough-guy status

Dana Timmons
Reporter

"City by the Sea" is a thriller that doesn't fall into any specific category.

Inspired by the Esquire Magazine article "Mark of a Murderer," by Mike McAlary, "City by the Sea" highlights family dynamics and what happens when a father is forced to choose between his son and his career.

Robert De Niro plays Vincent LaMarca, a New York City police officer who is investigating the murder of a drug dealer. LaMarca soon discovers that the prime suspect is his own son, Joey LaMarca (James Franco). When another murder is exposed and fingers are yet again pointed at Joey, LaMarca struggles to salvage his relationship with his son and solve the case at the same time.

He is faced with his past and the repercussions of leaving Joey

when he was a young child.

The concept of father-son relationships is stressed throughout the film, as murder and violence are intertwined with four generations of LaMarca men. Ironically, LaMarca's father was executed for murder and left his son at a young age. As the father of a 2-year-old, Angelo, Joey is placed in an identical situation, and must use his past experiences as a guide for the future.

Michael Caton-Jones produced, directed and wrote the film. His use of emotion and fast-paced action surround the viewer with a sense of involvement.

The acting also leaves an impression on audiences. DeNiro depicts his character as extremely strong-willed and loyal, which makes the viewer sympathize with him when he is torn between two important aspects of his life. DeNiro keeps his girlfriend, Michelle (Frances McDormand)



Photo courtesy of KRT Campus

James Franco stars in "City by the Sea" with Oscar-winners Robert DeNiro and Frances McDormand.

in the dark about his personal life, adding a sense of mystery to his character. Franco is the polar opposite because he portrays Joey as weak and unstable due to his drug addiction. These two characters juxtaposed against one another make this movie unique.

Rating: Worth \$6.50.

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