

# arts & entertainment

## In the Bubble

Tonight

Senior Seminar Series present:  
Little Women  
5:30 and 8 p.m.  
Black Box Theatre

Twisted Measure Fall Concert  
7:30 p.m.  
Elon Community Church  
\$3 with a Toy for Tots, \$5 without

Raining Jane  
11 p.m.  
McKinnon Hall

An Umpire Conscience  
11 p.m.  
West End Bar

Friday, Dec. 2

Sweet Signatures Fall Concert  
9:30 p.m.  
Whitley Auditorium  
\$3

Elan Concert  
7:30 p.m.  
McCrary Theatre

Twisted Measure Fall Concert  
7:30 p.m.  
Elon Community Church  
\$3 with a Toy for Tots, \$5 without

Monday, Dec. 5

Elon Idol  
7 p.m.  
McKinnon Hall

## Common Sense

with

RASMI

GAMBLE

Rasmi Gamble  
Reviewer

Let's be honest with ourselves, the majority of music that's out nowadays is one-dimensional, and extremely stagnant. It doesn't challenge its listeners at all.

Back in the '50s, '60s and '70s, musicians challenged each other by creating masterpieces. The Beach Boys brought out the best in The Beatles; The Who did that for Led Zeppelin. Early emcees in the '80s involved themselves in lyrical battles to prove who was the best and push the music further, not for promotion and other asinine reasons like rappers do today.

My favorite album this year was "Illinois" by Sufjan Stevens.

It's a refreshing album, different from the norm, which makes it a rarity by today's music standards.

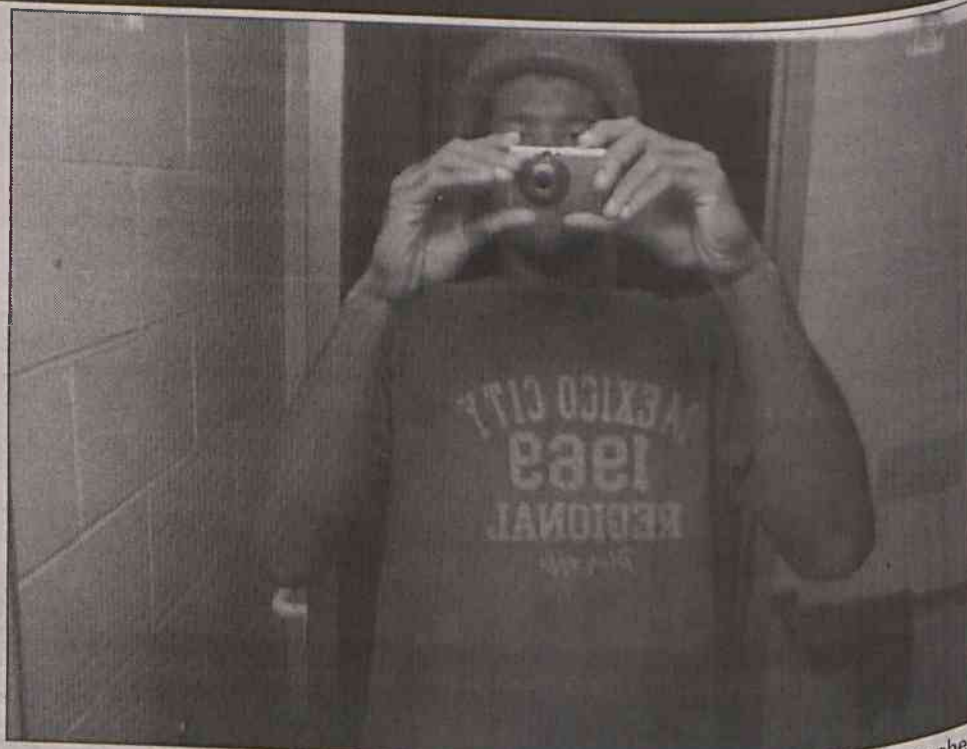
This album is the second installment of Stevens's 50 albums about 50 states project, the first being "Michigan," released in 2003.

Stevens allows this album to present itself like a guide, through the two hundred year history of the state. Subject matters include everything from UFOs to Superman, to a girl with bone cancer, Bible study and even the goat that cursed the Chicago Cubs.

What impressed me most about this album is the integration of different music styles. Stevens incorporates jazz, funk, pop, folk and rock by using more than 25 instruments. Stevens alone plays over 20 instruments.

Stevens brings forth an element that isn't present in everyday music. There's a vintage sort of quality to his music, similar to Burt Bacharach or Vincent Guaraldi.

He also brings an unusual, almost fictional element to his writing style (a la Steely Dan), which makes sense considering Stevens stud-



Rasmi Gamble/ Photographer

ied in the creative writing program at the New School in New York.

The song "Jacksonville" is held together well by a four-chord banjo pitch. How many artists today infuse banjo into their music? The only other instrument that is less used than the banjo is the harmonica.

"Chicago" is a tune with thundering drums, accompanied by a mist of strings and keyboards. The harmonies in this song almost overshadow what the song is actually about, the tendency for urban cities to employ highways, parking lots and commercial buildings on every square inch of available land.

On "Casimir Pulaski Day," (A Illinois state holiday honoring Casimir Pulaski, a Poland-born winner of the Battle of Brandywine) Stevens brings back the banjo. His vocals on

the song (along with the majority of the album) sound soft and intimate, as if he's alone in the studio and no one else will ever hear his voice. It blends in perfectly with his back up singers, the Illinoismaker Choir.

"Illinois" is a 74 minute long album featuring 21 tracks.

It's worth the purchase without a doubt. At the current rate Sufjan Stevens is working, his mission of releasing an album for every state will be complete around the year 2053.

Judging from his work thus far, it should be worth waiting for.

I'm out, Peace.

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