

## Air hums with new fresh French tunes

*New album 'Talkie Walkie' by Air offers enlightening melodies, filling the airwaves with a different kind of freshness.*

By Carmen Fosner  
Reporter

While listening to Air's new album, everything a listener experiences in his or her environment seems profound. Trivial things become epic when listening to "Talkie Walkie."

"Talkie Walkie" is perfect for a riding-in-a-car scene soundtrack. It is dreamy, electronic and introspective, ethereal and subdued. Watching the simplest actions, like leaf-blowing a driveway or watching a bird in the sky, seem to take on extra significance when playing this CD. Basically, Air makes a listener feel he belongs to part of a grand movie scheme, where the setting, mood, and tiny details play significant roles and everyday life is insightful. "Talkie Walkie" could support a shared glance between two friends or the death of thousands in war, and, because of this versatility, many movies, most recently "The Virgin Suicides" and "Lost in Translation," have featured Air's music.

Air consists of two Frenchmen, Jean-Benoit Dunckel and Nicolas Godin. Their third album, "Talkie Walkie," continues the duo's sexy, international sound. The album title choice of "Talkie Walkie" misrepresents the band's image by making them appear to be cutesy or cheeky. However, talkie walkie is just the way the French say walkie-talkie.

Air's Frenchness also comes out in their singing. Most of the

time, distinguishing that the band's lyrics are actually in English is quite difficult, especially when they are sung with strong accents and stereotypical French breathiness.

The futuristic album is mostly light and airy, with songs like "Biological" and "Alpha Beta Gaga" incorporating banjo strumming into the characteristically organic, electronic sounds Air makes. "Alpha Beta Gaga" even contains whistling to add to the album's mostly carefree disposition. The rest of "Talkie Walkie" typically encompasses this type of sound, with the pings and clicks of most of today's electronic music, and adding on occasion acoustic guitar ("Universal Traveler") or flute ("Cherry Blossom Girl").

However, a few songs stray into a darker sound that one could regard as a nighttime sound to the sunny ones of the rest of the album. The eerie keyboard and maraca use on "Run," along with a warm chorus of voices covering the broken record repetition of the vocals "run" and "go" in the song, make it one of the album's highlights, possibly the best song. "Another Day" also uses the creepy, ghost-like keyboards of "Run."

To the listener, "Talkie Walkie" becomes a way of connecting the many singular moments in life and making them relevant and important. Simple things become complex and plain ones become beautiful when this CD is in rotation. Differing from the mostly obnoxious and loud electronic music of today, Air brings a calm, yet danceable melody to the table.



## February renews interest in black history for students

*Students wonder if February should be the only time to honor African American deeds and personalities.*

By VeCoya Greene  
Reporter

February is the annual observance celebrating the history and achievements of African Americans. The observance was brainchild of Carter G. Woodson, a historian who was disturbed to find in the early 1920's that history books made little mention of the black American population.

In 1926, Woodson inaugurated the second week in February as Negro History Week to promote greater awareness of African American achievements. He chose this week because it coincided with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, two people whose actions had a profound impact on African Americans. The week was expanded into a month in 1976 and is still celebrated today.

However, many students feel

that it is unfair to focus attention so heavily on one group of people. They believe the month should be expanded to recognize all races.

"I feel [black history month] is given more attention than necessary. It would be more efficient to celebrate African Americans as well other races and cultures throughout the year so that we can all become less ignorant," said junior Carolyn Hellein.

The idea that black history month is considered a separate entity may also provoke the idea of disunity instead of harmony, its original purpose.

"Black history month causes racism through African Americans when slavery is so strongly focused on. If we really want to mend racial differences, exceptional individuals should be praised and positive examples of different races working together to end the injustices should be shown," said Hellein.

Many students feel that the black historical figures who are addressed in school curriculum are repeated time and time again.

"We always study the same five or six black history figures — everyone knows Martin Luther King. Why can't we study the contribution of other blacks in today's society?" said junior Allyson Westover.

Although black history is taught in the curriculum at school, some students feel it is not enough.

"I also believe more black history should be taught throughout our curriculum," said freshman Brittany Nicholson.

Some students feel black history month is undermined and could vastly be improved.

"Black history month should not be given just one month of recognition; let everyone hear, know, and learn about it throughout the year," said Nicholson.

While February is the month when the contributions of African Americans are focused upon, it is important to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans and all races all year long.

## "The Station Agent" surpasses standards for ticket to success

*Arrival of independent film "The Station Agent" at Carousel earns much praise from critic.*

By Max Socol  
Editor-in-Chief

Thank goodness for the Carousel in Greensboro.

Say what you want about poor location, or overpriced tickets, or the bizarrely soft-core merry-go-round picture on display in front, but the Carousel theater makes a point to carry as many independent movies as it can feasibly afford. I have the theater to thank for introducing me to what is undoubtedly the greatest movie of the year, and certainly a personal favorite: "The Station Agent."

A brief glimpse into the tortured and strange life of a man with dwarfism, the story begins when "Fin" (Peter Dinklage), an employee at a model train store and train aficionado himself, loses his good friend and co-worker. A recluse more by necessity than desire, Fin inherits a few acres of land in Newfoundland, New Jersey, the site of an abandoned train station depot, and without much thought sets off for the supposedly lonely landscape.

Fin, however, is in for a series of initially unpleasant surprises. Upon his arrival in Newfoundland, he is quickly accosted by an enthusiastic and unbelievably friendly roadside concessions vendor, who has set up shop just

outside the depot and Fin's new home. "Joe" (Bobby Cannavale) is a young Cuban American from New York taking care of his sickly grandfather's business in the small town, and though he is distracted by Fin's physical appearance, he does not let this stop him from befriending the quiet man. Fin also meets forgetful and clumsy local artist "Olivia" (Patricia Clarkson) when she nearly runs him off the road twice in the same day.

With the cast of main characters set, the adventures in Newfoundland begin. Fin grudgingly allows Joe to accompany him on train watching exhibitions and long walks, though not without first attempting the cold shoulder, and chance encounters with Olivia slowly bind the three together, as it is revealed that both Joe and Olivia have their own scarred and unfortunate pasts to resolve.

"The Station Agent" is most certainly Dinklage's career-defining role, and in a time when any appearance of a midget is good for a cheap laugh, it could not be more poignant. From having his picture snapped by the grocery clerk down the street, to being asked by a young girl what grade he is in, to being thrown against a car by a drunk outside of a bar, the daily struggles that define Fin's life are thrown into sharp contrast in the small, quiet Newfoundland. Gripped by a pathological hatred of his peers and mixed signals from the world

around him, Fin must come to terms with the idea that there are people who want to be around him despite his deformities. Faced with the prospect of a complete lifestyle change, Fin's inner struggle is fascinating and heartbreaking to watch.

For all of its heavy drama, "The Station Agent" is also laugh-out-loud funny at many points. The simple, life-loving Joe, contrasted with the more jaded Fin and Olivia, provides for some of the most amusing moments and situations in the film. Though Dinklage certainly holds his own as leading man, Cannavale must be credited for most if not all of the movie's humor, an imbalance that will not be lost on the audience.

Writer and director Thomas McCarthy keeps it simple, as it should be. The movie begins abruptly and ends in the same manner, but the overall feeling is one of intense satisfaction. The story needs no conclusion because there is no conclusion to be made. The audience is simply allowed to peer into the life of one fascinating man on his own odyssey for self-fulfillment, given the freedom to do with this glimpse what it pleases. A resounding five stars for "The Station Agent."

Director:  
Thomas McCarthy  
Starring: Peter Dinklage,  
Bobby Cannavale,  
Patricia Clarkson  
Score: 5/5



  
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