

The Darkness meets a not so Modest Mouse

Both The Darkness and Modest Mouse have recently released new albums with varying styles from eclectic to vintage. Both groups delight and surprise, while holding on to their original sound.

Carmen Fosner
Reporter

In recent times, the words "spandex unitard," "big hair," and "high-pitched falsetto" have not been commonly used for describing music. This has changed, however, now that hard rockers The Darkness have released their debut.

"Permission to Land" is the newest and only release from the surprisingly popular The Darkness, a British band whose album hit stateside this year. After recent popularity due to repeated showings on MTV and Fuse, the first single, "I Believe in a Thing Called Love" from "Permission to Land," has launched The Darkness into stardom outside of their home country.

The repeatedly asked question of whether The Darkness is really just spoofing 80's big hair metal or are actually trying to be serious by wearing flowery tiaras and sparkly spandex is one that

remains unanswered and adds to their mystique, the glam of David Bowie, the drama of Queen, and the guitars of Van Halen.

"Permission to Land" is not a very strong record musically, unless the listener is a true heavy metal fan, but it does have its good moments. Besides the obviously and insanely appealing "I Believe in a Thing Called Love" (complete with glass shatteringly high verses that are impossible to sing along to), a few other tunes are catchy enough for listeners not of the 80's hard rock persuasion.

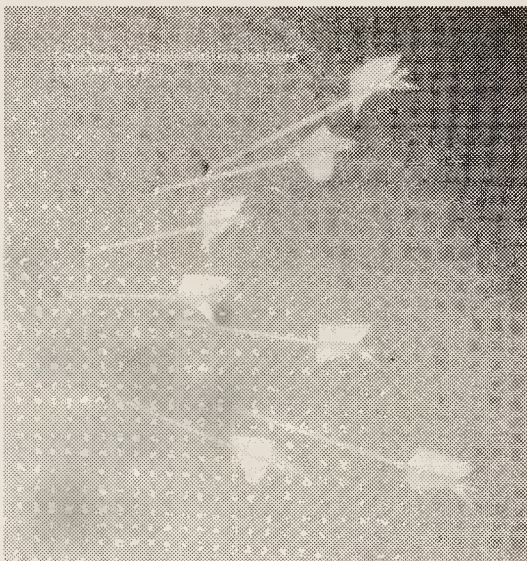
"Friday Night," for example, is uncannily similar to the famous hit by The Cure, "Friday I'm in Love," and even includes singer Justin Hawkins rattling off the days of the week like Robert Smith did in The Cure's original. "Holding my Own" differs from "Friday I'm in Love" and acts as the album's anchoring power ballad and closer, with a chorus bound to stay in the listener's head all day.

However ridiculous a bunch of grown men wearing shiny super tight pants who sing higher than The Bee Gees in "Staying Alive" seems, The Darkness does have a certain charisma that is simply infectious.

The band adds a humor and lightness to the typically serious rock scene—something that has been missing for quite a long time.

Even though The Darkness is considered simply a novelty act, providing nothing new in music, songs like "I Believe in a Thing Called Love" are too catchy to be shunned.

However, if The Darkness seems a little far-out, then Modest



Mouse must be from a completely different planet.

Many music fans and critics already agree that Modest Mouse is quite an eccentric band, but on "Good News for People Who Love Bad News," the group certainly broadens that definition.

Over the past few years, Modest Mouse has been one of the most popular indie rock bands. They produced their first major

label recording, and what some considered their masterpiece, "The Moon and Antarctica," in 2000. "Good News for People Who Love Bad News" is the second record turned out by major label Epic, the group's sixth, and adds a more mature feeling to their usual rambunctiousness, creating a pleasing balance of sobering and weird, modest and avant-garde.

The biggest difference between "Good News for People Who Love Bad News" and past recordings, however, is how buoyant and optimistic this new record is. Lyrics like "Everything

that keeps me together has fallen apart," from "The Moon and Antarctica," have been replaced with more positive lines like "Don't worry... we'll all float on ok."

Highlights include the album's first single, "Float On" (from which the above lyric is taken), which is executed in typical upbeat Modest Mouse style, and "Bury Me with It," in which front man and singer Isaac Brock has an almost

humorous tone in his voice—definitely an alteration from previous output. Also, "Blame It on the Tetons" displays a quieter side of Modest Mouse and sounds like a first-rate Wilco or Built to Spill song, complete with background fiddles, piano parts, and soft-spoken lyrics.

Other songs on "Good News for People Who Love Bad News" are simply out of the ordinary, like "Dance Hall" and "This Devil's Workday," which border on being frightening due to Brock's alarming vocals. Although overall there is less of Brock's angry screaming than Modest Mouse fans are used to, on these songs and others his delivery is just as intense.

Modest Mouse seems to have definitely grown musically, adding accordions, flutes and other atypical rock instruments, along with Brock's vocal ability. Differing from past albums that mostly consisted of an alternating quiet acoustic sound and punkish, guitar-driven, and vibrant tunes, "Good News for People Who Love Bad News" sticks to a middle ground and goes slyly from easy listening to bizarre—and back again.

Café and Bakery makes home in Carolina

The new Café Carolina and Bakery offers a wide variety of foods made fresh to order. At very reasonable prices, this new eatery is a superb Friendly Center addition.

Natalie Kaplan
Features Editor

Never failing to surprise and delight, the beloved Friendly Center has added yet another restaurant to its wide repertoire. Café Carolina and Bakery is now located where the short-lived Shakespeare's Café used to be. Testing out the water, the new Café has only been open a month but seems to have a very different dynamic than that of the earlier locale.

Café Carolina and Bakery is new to Greensboro, but not to North Carolina. With locations in Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Cary, this restaurant has proved to be a success all over the state.

Upon entering the location with my mother and sister, I was surprised to find myself embraced by springtime and a plethora of bunnies and flowers scattered all over the place on displays and hanging from the ceiling. Once my eyes refocused from the exorbitant amount of pastels, I noticed that every seat had a unique pillow bolted to the back of the bench.

An interesting idea, this added a "home at the cottage" feeling to the café. Along with the flowers on the ceiling, this café was seemingly conservation-minded, with a fan system of about 4 or 5 all running together on a moving belt. The belt kept all the fans rotating at an even pace without the use of electricity (this proved to be one of my favorite features of the restaurant).

We went up to the counter to order and found ourselves looking at a wide array of deli meats, bagels, soups, and panini and sandwich options. The menu was loaded with unique items that all had a very health-conscious flair to them. The overhead menu even had a newly added low-carb menu for all their avid "Atkins-ers."

I ordered the Portabella Panini. Costing only \$5.95, it was a grilled Italian style sandwich loaded with portabella mushrooms, roasted onions, roma tomatoes, fresh basil, boursin cheese, and pesto sauce. All the items at the restaurant come with an order of chips, pretzels, or a dandy little "cheese skewer" made of cheddar and swiss cheese blocks, green peppers, and baby tomatoes. I opted for the latter.

My mother's consisted of the coastal tuna salad sandwich from the low-carb menu, meaning there was no bread involved. She also opted for the skewer. My sister did as well with her order of the Chipotle Chicken panini. This

panini consisted of smoked chicken, portabella mushrooms, roasted onions, sun dried tomatoes, fresh basil, and chipotle mayonnaise.

After we finished ordering, we took our seats at one of the pillow-upholstered booths and waited for our food. Very shortly it arrived, and we all dug in. Each item tasted fresh.

My portabella panini was delicious, but extremely rich. I highly recommend it to those famished, but not to those who just want a small bite to eat. If one wants something smaller, my mother's tuna fish was absolutely fabulous and just the right serving.

Their wide range of soups, varying with the day, would also make a great light meal. The cup of soup is only \$3.25 and comes with a "famous" sweet potato biscuit. Bread bowls are also available.

Other interesting items include their menu of Café Breakfasts: the Egg Panini (consisting of egg, cheddar cheese, your choice of sage sausage, crispy bacon, or smoked ham on a buttery croissant or bagel) and the Egg pie, of the same ingredients, baked to perfection in a crispy pie. Another interesting item is their "The Jimmy V Hero" sandwich. Costing \$6.50, it is made of ham, Genoa salami, provolone cheese, lettuce, roma tomatoes, red onion, and spicy peppers on a crusty Italian baguette with seasoned olive oil

dressing. The Café donates a portion of the sales of every Jimmy V Hero to the V Foundation for Cancer Research. If you want to get a great sandwich and help make a difference at the same time, this is the place to eat! The café also offers rustic pizzas like the Tomato Basil and the Italian Pepperoni, each costing \$5.25.

While the food was very tasty, the best was yet to come! The café has a huge selection of baked goods and deserts ranging from "Goopy Butter Cake" to "The Chocolate Bomb." My sister and I decided to split a triple chocolate cookie and a gigantic M&M rice crispy treat that I measured using my mini-key chain measuring tape. The crispy treat was in actuality 5x 3 inches. If you cannot think how big that is, think of a slightly shrunken Norton Reader, and you will understand. All I can say is that I left the café extremely full.

Still looking for something different? Café Carolina will come to you at home as well! Not only can you dine there, but they also put together large party trays for the office or any event. Devoting an entire menu to their tray items and café box lunches, this café makes a great place to plan your next get together. Their trays vary from "The Yummy Yummy Yummy Tray," consisting of gourmet brownies and delectable desert bars, to "The Morning Glories Tray," made from an assortment

of favorites including their sweet potato biscuits, oversized muffins, croissants, angel muffins, baby bundt cakes, and gooey butter cake.

The café also has a nice selection of coffees and teas at very reasonable prices, considering their location. The house coffee is their Latte, made of coffee, vanilla, a mix of spices, and milk, and their teas range from Earl Grey to the "Republic of Tea's" Ginger peach.

In all, my experience at the Café Carolina was one I will want to enjoy again. The freshly prepared menu and the wide variety of items make it a unique treat, differing significantly from Macaroni Grill, Starbucks, and Kyoto Express, but pricing somewhere in between the three. Four stars for Café Carolina and Bakery; may it survive longer than Shakespeare's Café.

Carolina Café and Bakery

Address: Greensboro
Friendly Center
Phone: 336-854-1130
Fax: 336-854-1135
Open: 7am-8pm M-F
8am-8pm Saturday
8am-6pm Sunday
Price: \$1.50- \$57.95
(trays)
Rating:**** (4 of 5)