

DIVERSIONS

WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT SECTION • THE DAILY TAR HEEL • THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1996 • PAGE 5

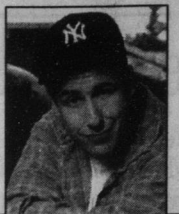
Movies Page 7

"Faithful"
Chazz Palminteri plays a mob hit man, again.



Comedy Page 9

Adam Sandler
Sandler's second comedy album falls a little short of his previous album.



DJ Dean Coleman's charismatic record-spinning sets Chapel Hill nights into motion for area clubgoers



& Motion



tepping into the former martial arts center on Rosemary Street across from Breadman's, you would never guess that the minimalist-industrial chic interior of the building once held dozens of people, all uniform clad and focused on their leader's next carefully planned move. These days, a different type of ritual dictates the behavior of the customers of the establishment now known as Gotham. The

patrons, equally as interested in the contact between two moving bodies (though hoping for a slightly more amicable pairing than that of the students of the former master), dress carefully, as if in a preordained fashion, and come together to consume spirits and move ceremonially to the constant beat which their "sense" provides. This new teacher chooses his "lessons" based on his students, rather than the other way around, and attempts to interpolate both their desires into one harmonious blend of pulsing light and pounding music. The "master" here is DJ Dean Coleman, perhaps the most prominent club record-spinner in Chapel Hill, and an artist of such skill that his reputation will deservedly soon be recognized worldwide.

Two years ago, Coleman, then twenty, badly needed money to pay his way through school at Carolina. Fond of dance music and just beginning to learn about spinning records, Dean decided that DJing could be his meal ticket, and began playing everybody's favorite hits at fraternities like Beta Theta Pi, the site of his first official "performance." From then on, his career as a professional DJ skyrocketed. Fairly modest beginnings at clubs like Players and the Power Company soon gave way to high-profile shows in such varied places as Groove Jet (in South Beach, Florida) and Christine's (in Cancun). Perhaps his most visible and highly reputable accomplishment is a residency at the 4,000-capacity Glam Slam, one of the biggest clubs in Florida and owned by the Purple One himself. Combine that with his current DJ residency at Gotham, and you have a twenty-two year old who has in two short years done more spinning than most DJs see in ten. Coleman is also involved in several record pools, in which he gets the latest



and hip-hop music, receives vinyl from as many as six labels at one time and is officially sponsored by Vestax Mixers. What have you been doing since 1994? Dean largely attributes his career choice both to "not being able to dance but wanting to go out to clubs" and to

helping him find an identity at a large university where your social security number is more important than the flesh and blood it represents. He recalls that in addition to being a fun way to make money, "I finally understood that DJing is perhaps the one thing I do better than everyone else." Uzoma "Uzi" Nwosu, the chief DJ for WXYC's New Science Experience, recognized his promise, and was one of the prime facilitators in Dean's development. While Coleman was working at Players, Uzi enlisted his aid on NSE one night and gave him his first on-air broadcast performance. "He mixed hip-hop better than any local DJ I've seen," Nwosu remarked, and added that "(Dean's) intensity on the wheels is nuts." Dean and Uzi have collaborated with one another ever since, Coleman frequently headlining at several raves staged at the Cradle and engineered by Nwosu.

By now Dean also understands the mysteries which lie behind quality DJing. Having more than a decade of piano training — for which he admits he didn't think he'd find any practical use — gave him not only a background in music, one necessary for any good DJ, but also provided him with the basics for understanding rhythm and the essentials of beat matching, the one talent which more than any other separates the men from the boys. "Once you learn that, the scratching and more intricate stuff comes, sooner or later, but more naturally," as he says it only recently did for him. Beat matching and scratching is especially important in hip-hop, where the beats aren't so clearly drawn along lines of "phrasing," or 32-bar formats. "There's a difference in mixing and mixing right. To be good DJ you have to combine the beat matching and phrasing and level matching."

While other DJs do little more than press "play" on CD players and raise and lower mixer switches, Coleman controls every aspect of the music until it becomes not simply an all night dance mix but an actual expression of his artistry. Describing the milieu of his sets, Dean admits he

prefers "Euro- and commercial dance music, and house," but he also says that he likes to mix some new with the old, perhaps playing "Funky Cold Medina" (you remember that, don't you?) then sneaking a house break under-neath so he can segue into a lesser known tune. Overall, his

aim is to accommodate both those listeners who want all the standards (club dance music, old-school rap or otherwise) and those who come to hear something fresh. He also notices that this compromise has only increased the number of clubgoers coming out to dance, appreciating the variety of music between the known and unknown.

As recently as two years ago the scene for dance music was extremely limited, with little more than the usual barrage of Cypress Hill and Spin Doctors to satiate the growing interest in raves and rave culture. Several well-staged raves thrown at the Cat's Cradle and other venues by various local entrepreneurs and on-campus special interest groups like B-GLAD helped boost visibility, but the main centers remained in Greensboro, Durham and Raleigh. However, through the perseverance of DJs like Coleman and his ilk, the Chapel Hill scene has grown extremely strong.

Local music stores carry more dance music than ever before, and the subtle influence of those past events has brought different yet similar forms of music into the vernacular of indie rock and true "alternative" that pervades the playboxes of all of the campus radio stations in the area.

Coleman considers house and dance music to be the new "alternative" music, gradually becoming more mainstream, and though he likes to see its popularity grow, he finds a problem (just like many of those opposed to the popularization of "alternative" art forms) in too many artists and producers making "quickie" products, songs and albums designed with little feeling for a quick profit that undercut the development of the genre as a legitimate art form.

Dean's future looks as bright as his past. His reputation has reached all the way up to that paragon of American diversity, New York, where a recent birthday gift, a box of brand new vinyl from a friend, had the words "Oh! Dirty Bastard" and "Method Man" scrawled upon it by the owners of those appellations. Even though his current job leaves him with too little time to continue his studies, he continues to play at Gotham, in the interim being flown to Florida (courtesy of Glam Slam) four or five times a year to DJ private parties, and he has just signed on to a promotional company out of Chicago that is sending him to Puerto Rico, France and Japan.

At the end of each session, when the last few students are still struggling to keep up with his frenetic teaching, most by now having accrued a "sparring partner" and filled with Gotham's unique spirits, the chain-link fence holding Dean high above seems to disappear like wafts of burning gossamer rice paper. And though you are supposed to "pay no attention to the man behind the curtain," the personality with which DJ Dean Coleman imbues each of his performances is unavoidably noticed. Dean, however, just shrugs it off: "dance music needed to be played, and now it is." Spoken like a true, modest sensei.

STORY BY TODD GILCHRIST
PHOTOS BY KRISTIN ROHAN

Christian Music Moves to Mainstream

BY MARSHALL BENBOW
FEATURES EDITOR

The world of Christian music used to be headlined by names like Stryper, the '80s metal band of black and gold spandex, Amy Grant, before she went pop, and Michael W. Smith. Most of these stars were tucked away on the shelf of a Bible bookstore or arranged in a haphazard manner in an obscure section of a mainstream music store, and with good reason. The musical quality rated high on cheese and low on substance.

Music has long been a forum for communicating beliefs, messages and questions. Many musicians use their music to question God, i.e. Smashing Pumpkins in "Bullet With Butterfly Wings" and R.E.M. in "Losing My Religion." But listeners are often content to just listen to the beat and don't pick up on the lyrical content because the music overpowers the message.

"Christian" music used to be 90 percent message

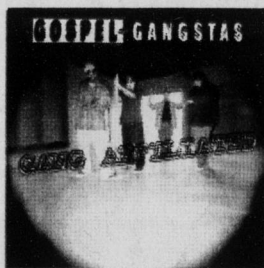
and 10 percent music. But in the '90s have come a wave of bands whose records are moving outside the Bible bookstores and onto the mainstream music shelves.

Groups like Dakota Motor Company, Jars of Clay and even DC Talk, are leading the charge, showing that Christian bands not only have a message, they have the music to get it heard.

Jars of Clay — *Jars of Clay* (Essential)

Jars of Clay has made the biggest splash on the nation's mainstream music scene, receiving air play from Seattle to Charlotte for their first single, "Flood."

Blending orchestral arrangements, vocal harmonies and even a recorder or two, Jars of Clay has put



together a first-class CD that sounds like nothing you've heard before.

The first song on this self-titled debut, is best described as a subtle explosion. In "Liquid" a violin wails plaintively over a mandolin for about 20 seconds, and then with a yell, the band is on you and doesn't let up until the end of the CD. A video for "Liquid" is on the way.

MTV's alternative rock program, 120 Minutes, has been airing a video for Jars' first release, "Flood." This song is a call for help that features a driving acoustic guitar that sounds much like a torrent of rain. The guitar then slows to a steady musical drizzle as lead singer Dan Haseltine calmly explains that he is sinking into the mud. The torrent returns with the flood in the chorus. "If I



Sixpence None the Richer — *This Beautiful Mess* (R.E.X.)

Call them 10,000 Maniacs with an attitude. Lead singer Leigh Bingham's voice is higher and sweeter than Natalie Merchant's, and guitarist/songwriter Matt Slocum's music is harder than the Maniacs', mixing in heavy guitar riffs and a thudding bass. Sixpence resists the comparison, but on songs like "Thought Menagerie" and "Drifting," listeners may not

be able to help themselves. This album is about pain and the reality that there are not always easy answers to life. "Love, Salvation, the Fear of Death," one of the best songs on the

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