

Kaplan album lacks maturity, direction

There are those albums, far and few between, which sound so wonderful that we never want them to be over. But, of course, for every album of this type, there must be 20 others that abuse your ears to the point that you think they'll never end. Jonathan Kaplan's album *Through the Window* is one of the latter 20.

Kaplan's musical endeavors show a brief glimmer of promise at the outset of the album but quickly plummet to a level of annoying monotony that seems to make for an eternity of boredom. The first track, "Faith," begins with crashing guitar, pounding drums and seems to suggest a kind of vigor that brings hope for the rest of the album. However, those

hopes are soon shattered by the remainder of the song and CD, for that matter.

The song "8 mm film" mixes a lively acoustic sound with whining electric guitar licks to salvage a hint of musical decency. However, the most captivating part of the song is not the music but the lyrics which hit close to home for many Chapel Hill residents: "Jan. 26, 1995, Henderson St. Chapel Hill, NC, 1:46 in the afternoon, crazed gunman, an M1 rifle, 45 rounds of ammo, 2 dead, 3 wounded, everyone is asking why? Why did this happen? Why did Wendel Williamson do what he did?"

The album's motif is all too obvious. Kaplan's lyrics show maturity and depth, but his music remains infantile and falls short of providing structure for his vocal contemplations.

While the song "as for me" represents the best Kaplan has to offer with crisp riffs on the electric guitar, it still lacks distinctive sound and falls into a repetitious rut. And that seems to be one

of the album's main downfalls.

It's as if each song begs to be taken in a particular direction but are all left hanging. The final tune, "rebekeh," is the best example of this fault. Presenting a nice lilting touch on the acoustic guitar, Kaplan seems to have crafted an ear-catching sound that, if developed, would deliver a song worth listening to. But the song goes nowhere, and the only sentiment that arises is "When will this ever end?"

The best way to characterize the album as a whole is to look at the effect (or lack thereof) that each song creates for the listener. Listen to a mere 15 seconds of certain catchy songs on the radio, and you'll be whistling their tunes for an entire day.

Listen to Kaplan's album for an entire day if you wish, but don't expect to be able to hum a single note of a single song. Instead, you might just take the CD title's advice and decide to throw it "through the window."

BROCK PIERCE

CD Review
Jonathan Kaplan
Through the Window
Jonathan Kaplan



Ⓝ

Pietasters light up stage with energetic ska grooves

At 11 p.m. Saturday, The Pietasters finally appeared, dressed in suits, on a smoke-filled stage to give a packed Cat's Cradle an hour and 15 minutes of pure ska entertainment (fortunately, the majority of the smoke came intentionally from machines for special effects).

The band's upbeat lyrics, fun vocals, and intricate trumpet, saxophone and trombone solos exemplify the steadily growing attraction to ska music.

With music reminiscent of traditional Jamaican-influenced ska with some added modern punk sounds, the band showed the large audience the true power of horn-driven music — most

notably the ability to grab the attention of fans from varied backgrounds.

From skater people, to fraternity and sorority people, to punks, to preps and to beer-drinking idiots (this last group drawing its crowd from each of the other categories), the audience lulled not once during the entire concert.

Opening the concert with three mellow songs (the latter two being love songs), The Pietasters slowly teased the eager-to-dance audience, and the potential energy of the crowd reached its peak of the night by the end of the third song.

At this point, lead singer Stephen Jackson took advantage of the situation, asking the audience, "Do you guys like to drink beer?" With the incessant roar that followed, Jackson dedicated the fourth song, "Take it Easy," to all the beer drinkers. The entire audience, beer drinkers and all, went insane.

From this point on, the kinetic energy of the crowd took control. It seemed that everyone who could fit on the dance floor was hopping around and having a great time dancing to the sound of one of the best horn sections in ska music today.

Meanwhile, I calmly observed the dancing crowd from my seat in the back of the Cradle, cursing my need to take notes on the concert.

By the seventh song, my desire to dance was too strong and I spent the remainder of the concert disrespecting my journalistic career on about one square foot of the dance floor. What can I say? The concert was simply too good to pass off as a chore. The Pietasters emanate their enthusiasm and pure understanding of ska music with every note they play.

My only wish is for their next concert to last a little longer.

CARL JACOBS

Concert Review
The Pietasters
Cat's Cradle



Ⓝ



The Seymores fail to create a distinctive sound and lose focus with conflicting musical forms. The band, originally formed in Richmond, makes a futile attempt to mix the musical genres of punk and pop.



MUSIC BRIEFS

The Seymores
The Seymores

Pitch a Tent Records

I could get a group of guys in my residence hall and make a better CD than this.

Maybe the recording company forgot to listen to the Seymores' demo tape. In any case, it must be an accident that this group ever made an album. The CD sleeve doesn't even give the musicians' names. Hmmm ...

This group could best be described as

SCOTT RUDICIL

Music Reviews
The Seymores
"No Feet"

Musings of a Creek Dipper

Ⓝ

a homeless man's (assuming this worse than a poor man's) Green Day with worse vocals and more annoying screechy noises from the guitar. And Green Day isn't even that good to begin with.

Alanis Morissette

Musings of a Creek Dipper

Ⓝ

Distinctive voices have become harder to come by in these modern days of hearing the same song on the radio 50 times in a row, but Williams is a refreshing difference.

Whether she hurls the listeners in with the dreamy sounds of "let it be so" or gets a good laugh from "grandpa in a cornpatch" (laughing yet?), she's got their attention. Even if her voice takes a song or two to get used to, its worth the time.

My first Williams' CD was stolen (she's had a few before this one). I always knew it was gonna be worth something someday.

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