

Runaway Cab Never Gets Going on *Upside*

By RUSS LANE
Staff Writer

Local act Runaway Cab's work is consistently well-executed, but doesn't go for the extra mile of intensity. The band's new album, *On the Upside*, is full of good songs with unrealized potential.

Basing its sound in the Vertical Horizon/Foo Fighters mold, *On the Upside* takes no wrong turns. None of the album's 10 songs are victims of poor

judgment, a minor miracle considering how few albums today don't include a throwaway track or two.

Unfortunately, the album produces no strong tracks either. Having mastered the art of the power-pop song structure, *On the Upside* sticks close to its comfort zone and sounds too polished for Runaway Cab's own good.

It seems as if the entire album promotes the Runaway Cab live show instead of vice versa. "The More That You Take" steps beyond catchy and becomes predictable, and is soon to be the audience's choice sing-along track.

While the balanced mix of guitar, rhythm and piano works well, some

tracks sound too mannered and restrained, as if the band is rushing through the studio work to unleash these songs on tour.

In spite of its faults, however, *On the Upside* shows hints of Runaway Cab's capabilities. Although the album's lyrics generally examine collegiate preoccupations with ambition and crazed relationships, some of the song's commentaries are more clever than others.

"Money Bags" is a surprisingly edgy critique of the rock star cliché and strays the most from the band's perfect pop influences. On "Anything" and "Pride," the band writes about the great singer-songwriter subject of the '90s — the

hopelessly co-dependent relationship.

"Sunny Side" proves the most subversive track on the album. It hints at the quiet desperation of the Thursday night party crowd after the bars close, like a post-millennium "Closing Time." While all these songs are well-done, the band sounds like it didn't have the energy or the time to take it all the way.

Subsequent albums will probably eclipse the unrealized songs on *On the Upside*. In the interim, check out Runaway Cab's live show to hear these songs as they should sound on record.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

German Teen Boy Band Bombs Stateside Debut

By ERIN WYNIA
Senior Writer

Trying to capitalize on the ridiculous popularity of teen sensations Backstreet Boys, Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears, First Love manages only to make a mockery of what little talent the aforementioned acts actually do possess.

This quartet, assembled by its mentor/producer in typical boy band fashion, hails from Germany. Remember all the stereotypes of German pop music as hard-edged, industrial, but danceable? Well, First Love provides even more evidence that Germans should stick to what they do best and leave pop cheese to the Americans.

Let's run down a list of how First Love fails at the seemingly simple formula for achieving teen sensation status. Catchy dance beats. First Love's stripped-down percussion tries to reach the cool, grinding funk of Bell Biv DeVoe's "Do Me," but instead sounds like a watered-down version of the Mountain Dew Super Bowl commercial. Beats me how these four will ever fit the requisite choreographed dance moves to unenergetic music.

Lusty ballads. New Kids on the Block run circles around these guys. Normally, when a group mixes high falsetto vocals (think "I'll Be Loving You (Forever)"), slow piano accompaniment and a low-voiced spoken message to pre-pubescent girls (think Barry White), the result

is a guaranteed hit. But the members of First Love possess neither the suave style nor the gentle, intimate vocals required to pull off a decent pop ballad.

Heartfelt lyrics. These posers manage to sound as heartfelt as a third-grader. With an average count of 44 different words per song (not including the average of 65 "Ooh baby" moans they inject into each tune), the band's lyrics hardly stand up to the only slightly more inspired prose of 'N Sync.

What's worse, the words don't even make sense. An attempt at using literary devices such as similes results in disasters like this: "I want to make love to you tonight/Like the stars in the sky." What does slapping bodies have to do with celestial bodies?

Silly hooks. To become a true teen sensation, acts bank on one hook to keep their name in listeners' memories. Backstreet Boys found it with the omnipresent "Backstreet's back, all right!"

But this debut sees First Love still searching. Their best reach for a hook involves the outright stealing of the New Kids' unforgettable "Right Stuff" "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh" chant. So unforgettable that no one hearing First Love's rendition could accuse them of originality.

Admittedly, First Love does have the cute faces and fashionably coordinated outfits that must account for at least 75 percent of boy bands' appeal to 13-year-olds. But without some sort of musical substance, this band will discover it really is hard to hang tough with even the least discriminating of audiences.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Streets Showcases the LOX's Hardcore Sound

By SHINDY CHEN
Staff Writer

"If you're glad the LOX are Ruff Ryders now" you better be investing 13 bucks in their latest album.

The rap trio's sophomore effort, *We Are the Streets*, showcases the hard-core, cutting-edge sound for which the Yonkers, N.Y., natives originally gained notoriety on underground tapes, back when they called themselves the Warlocks, and current label-mate DMX was merely a twinkle in the eyes of Ruff Ryders' chief executives.

The album returns the group to a musical and lyrical comfort zone but is also a product of months of contractual disputes between the group and former hip-hop mogul Sean "Puffy" Combs.

LOX felt disillusioned and artistically limited on Combs' Bad Boy label and, on its debut album, *Money, Power & Respect*, the group was mostly rapping about the commercial and material aspects of hip hop on tracks like "If You Think I'm Jiggie."

Tracks like these didn't go with the street reputation they'd worked to create and maintain. The group was dissatisfied with the project's reception, which labeled them as concerned mainly with showing off the money they made.

After a revolutionary movement that spawned T-shirts emblazoned with "Free the LOX" and "Let the LOX Go," the group was allowed to sign on with Ruff

Ryders, a label the group felt would allow more freedom in terms of music and anti-flossing lyrics.

The LOX tells thugged-out street stories of sex, drugs and violence, as related in the blazing single "Wild Out": "I get rap money, plus I'm in the hood wit dimes/ And I ain't got no felonies, I'm good wit crimes/ Not all dat wit macs, but I'm good wit nines/ Great wit eights/ Nigga, I'll heat ya face."

The album is produced mostly by Ruff Ryders' main beat-maker, Swiss Beatz, who somehow snatched the prize of Source Magazine's "Producer of the Year." Not surprisingly, the tracks not mastered by Beatz are the hotter tracks on the CD, and seem to complement the LOX better in terms of lyrical style.

Just when Swissz's music gets repetitively tired and choppy, P. Killer's tracks

"Breathe Easy" and "Scream LOX" take the album in a more soulful, bass-heavy direction, while Premier's "Recognize" has smooth, head-bouncing appeal. Timbaland's club hit "Ryde or Die, Bitch" provides a refreshing melody laced with the LOX's want ad style lyrics describing their perfect "bitch."

The LOX hopes its new album will bring the success that the majority of the Ruff Ryders artists have been achieving. For fans who supported them from their first album through all the drama of a grass roots movement, *We are the Streets* serves as a testament not only to their freedom from the clutches of the music industry, but also to their survival impossible without loyal listeners.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

MUSIC

Cat's Cradle, 300 E. Main St., Carrboro, 967-9053.
Go! Rehearsals Room 4, 100 Brewer Lane, Carrboro, 969-1400.
Local 506, 506 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill, 942-5506.

Thursday, Feb. 10

- Weekend Excursion w/ King Konga at Cat's Cradle.
- Hopper's Weasel w/ The Mertons at Go! Studios.

Friday, Feb. 11

- Cary Pierce at Cat's Cradle.
- Sorry About Dresden, the Scaries, 20/20 and Stick Figure Suicide at Go! Stud.os.
- Tad Dreis at the Coffee Mill Roastery.
- Tom Maxwell and the Minor Drag w/ Lou Ford at Local 506.

Saturday, Feb. 12

- Gran Torino at Cat's Cradle.
- Anthony Neff at the Coffee Mill Roastery.
- Marsha at Local 506.

Sunday, Feb. 13

- Flicker Film Festival at Cat's Cradle.
- Anna to the Infinite Power CD release at Local 506.

Monday, Feb. 14

- The Samples w/ Push Stars at Cat's Cradle.

Tuesday, Feb. 15

- Southern Groove Society w/ Life Trip at Go! Studios.

Wednesday, Feb. 16

- Steve Forbert Band w/ Pinetops at Cat's Cradle.
- Park Life at Local 506.

ART

- "From the Molecular to the Galactic: The Art of Max Ernst and Alfonso Ossorio." Through March 26. Ackland Art Museum, UNC campus. 966-5736.
- "Transatlantic Dialogue: Contemporary Art In and Out of Africa." Through March 26. Ackland Art Museum, UNC campus. 966-5736.
- "Jim Kellough: 16 Paintings." Through Feb. 18. Hanes Art Center Gallery, UNC campus.
- Dorothy Gillespie: Recent Works. Celebrating the artists 80th birthday. Through Feb. 19. Somerhill Gallery, Chapel Hill.

THEATER

- "The Glass Menagerie." PlayMakers Repertory Company. Through Feb. 27. Paul Green Theatre, UNC campus. 962-PLAY.
- "Picasso at the Lapin Agile." Lab! Theatre. Friday through Tuesday. Playmakers Theatre, UNC campus.
- "Tongue of a Bird." Streetsigns Center for Literature and Performance. Feb. 14 through Feb. 27. Swain Hall Studio 6, UNC campus. 960-4299.

FILM

- "Runaway Bride." 7:30 p.m. Friday; 10 p.m. Saturday. Carolina Union Auditorium.
- "Never Been Kissed." 10 p.m. Friday; 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Carolina Union Auditorium.
- "The Parallax View." 7 p.m. Tuesday. The Carolina Theatre, Durham.

PLAN AHEAD

- The Khac Chi Ensemble: Exquisite

Music from Vietnam. Saturday. The Carrboro ArtsCenter. 929-2787.

North Carolina Symphony all-orchestra concert. Saturday. Memorial Hall, UNC Campus. 733-2750.

Primus w/ P.O.D. Tuesday. The Ritz, Raleigh. 834-4000.

311 w/ Jimmie's Chicken Shack. Feb. 21. The Ritz, Raleigh. 834-4000.

The Brothers Creeggan featuring Jim Creeggan of the Barenaked Ladies w/ Julie Doiron. Feb. 20. The Casbah at Tremont Music Hall, Charlotte, N.C. (704) 522-6500.

Cher w/ Lou Bega and C-Note. Feb. 26. Entertainment & Sports Arena, Raleigh. 834-4000.

Smashmouth w/ Luscious Jackson & 22 Jacks. March 6. The Ritz, Raleigh. 834-4000. Student discount tickets available.

Dance Theater of Harlem. March 6-7. Memorial Auditorium, UNC campus. 962-1449.

CAROLINA UNION ACTIVITIES BOARD FILM COMMITTEE

flicks

Pre-Valentine's Day Weekend

RUNAWAY BRIDE
Friday @ 7:30PM
Saturday @ 10:00PM

NEVER BEEN KISSED
Friday @ 10:00PM
Saturday @ 7:30PM

FREE! WITH UNC ONE CARD!

Tickets Available at Union Front Desk Prior to Screening
All movies shown in Carolina Union Auditorium.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 962-2285.

CAT'S CRADLE

967-9053
300 E. Main Street • Carrboro

FEBRUARY

10TH	WEEKEND EXCURSION w/ King Konga
11 FR	CARY PIERCE from Jackpierce (\$8) w/ Drifting Through
12 SA	GRAN TORINO (\$6) w/ Junk in the Trunk
13 SU	Flicker (\$3, 8:30 pm)
14 MO	THE SAMPLES** (\$10) w/ Push Stars
16 WE	STEVE FORBERT** (\$12) 8:30 pm w/ Pinetops
17th & 18th	moe** (\$12)
19 SA	HOT WATER MUSIC** (\$7)
20 SU	DONNA THE BUFFALO** (\$10)
22 TU	REVEREND HORTON HEAT w/ Hank Williams III** (\$11/\$13)
23 WE	BLUE DOGS (\$6)
24 TH	LAMBCHOP** (\$8) w/ North Mississippi All-Stars
25 FR	20 MILES / Bob Log / Bandwagon (\$7)
26 SA	THE CONNELLS** (\$12)
28 MO	KENNY WAYNE SHEPARD** (\$17)
29 TU	JONATHAN RICHMAN**

MARCH

2 TH	CHESSIE, KIT CLAYTON & STEWART WALKER
4 SA	Hi Mom! Film Fest
9 TH	PAULA COLE** (\$15) 9 pm show
12 SU	the DONNAS** (8 pm)
21 TU	PETER ROWAN / TONY RICE ** 8 pm
24 FR	YO LA TENGO
26 SU	THE SELDOM SCENE** (8 pm)
28 TU	TEN-FOOT POLE (8 pm show)

SHOWS @ GO! Rehearsal, Room 4:
919-969-1400

FEBRUARY

11 FR	SCARIES, SORRY ABOUT DRESDEN
18 FR	FIN FANG FOOM, OXES
19 SA	SATURNALIA STRING TRIO
21 MO	ALL TIME PRESENT
26 SA	ALL SCARS
27 SU	SEELY / KINGSBURY MANX

MARCH

10 FR	Elf Power w/ Summer Hymns
23 TH	Love As Laughter, Les Savy Fav
25 SA	RICHARD BUCKNER

**Advance ticket sales at SchoolKids (in Chapel Hill, Durham and Raleigh). For Credit Card orders CALL 919-967-9053

www.catscradle.com

it's better than a bar it's confidential it's truly just it's

it's choices it's simple it's for shy people it's

it's flirting it's

it's one-on-one romance it's

it's safe it's fun it's live, all the time! free to try it's

it's in your own home it's initial sparks it's singles it's

Live Links

CHAPEL HILL

(919) 869-8555

Try it free! CODE NO. 3434

RALEIGH (919) 573-6844 DURHAM (919) 287-3333

it's always free for women! it's always free for women!