



Morphine frontman Mark Sandman died of a heart attack during a show in Italy, leaving the group with one final, fantastic album.

Late Singer's Voice Haunts Group's Best Album Yet

By ERIN WYNIA
Senior Writer

Boston-grown Morphine came into its own in 1993, its low-tone heavy blend of rock, jazz, blues and avant-garde seeping into college radio stations across the world.

And with *The Night*, its latest and last creation, Morphine reaches a new artistic peak.

Delivered to record industry monolith Dreamworks mere weeks before the band's frontman, Mark Sandman, died from a heart attack while onstage in Palestrina, Italy, the record reveals a mature, sophisticated, yet characteristically subtle groove.

Sandman's imprint haunts the record, from his first low, hot vocals, which breathe a blanket of thick smoke across the album.

Before leaving for Europe last summer, Sandman had finished tweaking *The Night*, Morphine's only album without an outside producer, and keeping all the musical decisions to himself paid off. Each song sounds fresh, yet unmistakably Morphine — the mark of an experienced songwriter. The music swings from the sultry blues-tinged sax

on the title track to the party rock of "Top Floor, Bottom Buzzer," each tune a different incarnation of the same musical genius.

For the first time, Sandman augmented the band's usual trio of bass, drums and baritone sax, forming lush, intricate arrangements for *The Night*.

Sitar (a three-stringed Indian instrument), organ (courtesy of Medeski, Martin and Wood member John Medeski), piano, cello and female background vocals all come together on *The Night* to fill out the band's normally sparse instrumentation. Sandman had maintained that artists could produce creative music without added instruments but decided to give the music a new dimension on this album.

So he branched out, moving toward another stage of his musical life. But the record does not play like a premonition of death. Instead, the words and music of *The Night* conjure thoughts of Marlboro-filled jazz clubs and sexy blues mamas.

Morphine could not have hoped to end its run with an album of higher caliber than *The Night*. If anything, the knowledge that Sandman died shortly after completing such an accomplished album only leaves a sense of yearning for what more could have followed.

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

Disjointed Second Half Drags 'Sweet' Down to Mediocrity

By JEREMY HURTZ
Staff Writer

With "Sweet and Lowdown," Woody Allen again shows the arrogant, boorish side of a confused artist with his portrayal of the fictional jazz guitarist Emmet Ray, yet in the process creates a sweeter film than we've seen from him in some time.

Much of the credit for the success of "Sweet and Lowdown" goes to the two leads, Sean Penn as Ray and Samantha Morton as his mute lover Hattie.

Ray has been wounded by women, and he's not about to submit to another. Only at moments does Ray let his façade drop to show his love for Hattie.

Morton delivers an even more impressive performance, deserving of Oscar consideration. Allowing a major character no lines seems a gimmick at first, but Morton emotes so precisely that Hattie's childlike goofiness soon wins us over completely.

This film represents a change of pace in many ways for prolific auteur Allen. His trademark one-liners might be in short supply, but the film's most important departure is its refreshing focus.

Many of this decade's Allen projects feature such a large cast that the main characters get lost among the cameos. Here, the story stays Ray's throughout.

Still, we view events in "Sweet and Lowdown" through the contradictory, cracked lens of legend and industry myth.

At one point the narrative jumps forward six months, skipping important events in Ray's life — ostensibly because little is known of this period.

Hattie suddenly disappears from the film; though this unexpected shift is jarring, its conceit is bold and interesting.

Unfortunately, that which follows the shift is neither. Uma Thurman plays Ray's second foil, Blanche, as the dead opposite of Hattie: intellectual, talkative, manipulative and unlikeable.

Despite Thurman's capable performance, as soon as she enters, the film flounders. With two outwardly reprehensible characters consuming the screen, the story soon bores. Only in its final few scenes does "Sweet and Lowdown" find the proper voice again.

Ultimately the film suffers from "Full Metal Jacket" syndrome, whose cinematic victims have stellar first halves and drastically inferior second halves.

One might argue that in Allen's grand scheme, we're not supposed to enjoy the movie when Hattie is missing — that we should feel as lost and incomplete as Ray does — and if so, he succeeds. But that's a lowdown trick to pull on an unsuspecting audience.

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Food Without Fuss! The Burrito Bunker. 11am-10pm. 932-9010. 161 1/2 E. Franklin St. (Beyond Bandido's ALL the way thru the Rathskellar Alley)

Screwball Winds Down With Worn-Out Lyrics

By SHINDY CHEN
Staff Writer

Mediocre expectations run high on the debut from Queensbridge-bred rap group Screwball.

Anticipated since last November, Y2K, released on "Tommy Boy," leaves the listener a little fatigued, but within the mumbo jumbo are some banging songs and an all right album.

Comprised of emcees Hostyle, K.L., Poet and Solo (a.k.a. Kyrion), Screwball's members united for the haul to fame, claim to have been in the solo rap game for more than a decade.

Screwball first rapped together on a Poet-produced track called "Set It" in 1993. Since then, the group's fame has grown with last summer's jeep anthem "Who Shot Rudy" (attacking New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani), and its latest track, "H-O-S-T-Y-L-E." The video now graces BET's "Rap City" daily.

Like Mobb Deep and Nas, stories of Queensbridge lace Screwball's lyrics. Though the year 2000 has been kind to the group, the respect is long overdue.

The album is also laced with hard-hit-

ting, grinding beats that strive to establish the group as underground rap pioneers. But, Rap fans who strictly listen to the flashy, synthesizer-infused beats in mainstream hip hop may have trouble adjusting to Screwball's rawness.

Over the languid mafioso chords of Premiere's "Seen it All" and Pete Rock's "You Love to Hear the Stories" featuring MC Shan, the group relies on loud, percussive lyric-splitting that lacks clarity and uniqueness.

One learns that Screwball 1) has been around for a long time 2) is tough and doesn't take crap and 3) is proud of the group's native QB. These sentiments could be felt from just about any rapper with a few rhymes in the industry today. So where's the underground originality? They say what's already been said, and the lyrics are used up by mid-album.

Also, the group contradicts itself on the track "Attention: A & R Department." If Screwball wanted to release an album proving its individuality, they shouldn't have rapped about hating guest stars, catchy hooks and R&B stylings, because the album is nothing but that.

The keeper songs are those previously mentioned and Premier's "F.A.Y.B.A.N." ("Fuck All Y'all Bitch-Ass Niggas") in which Poet screams: "I'm ready to smack the shit outta them/



Once praised for originality, Screwball disappoints rap listeners on its latest album despite a few grinding beats and hot tracks.

I don't give a fuck if they gold or platinum ..."

Other hot tracks are: "The Blocks" featuring Nature, "Take it There" featuring Capone and "That Shit" and "Somebody's Gotta Do It" featuring Terror Squad (Big Pun R.I.P.) All but one are saved by a producer or guest artist, and all are songs that could have been but weren't carried on the sole

weight of the group's shoulders. Screwball's Y2K pleases, but is a shallow representation of what the guys claim to have been doing for so long. Years of experience should be detectable in the music and lyrics, and Screwball comes up a little short.

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BIZBUZZ ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Goodbye Snoopy, Goodbye Charles Schulz

"Peanuts" creator Charles Schulz died on Saturday night after a three-month battle with colon cancer. The 77-year-old's death came on the eve of the final new installation of the "Peanuts" comic strip.

Schulz's illness forced him to retire after nearly 50 years. The final daily

strip appeared Jan. 4, but he continued to draw the Sunday strip until this week.

"Peanuts" appeared in more than 2,600 publications in 75 different countries. During his career, Schulz amassed more than \$55 million despite criticism that his drawings were too primitive.

Since Schulz announced his retirement, collectors have snapped up all the "Peanuts" memorabilia they could find.

For his farewell "Peanuts," Schulz did not change any of the ingredients that had made the strip so successful. Sunday's strip showed one panel with Snoopy typing on top of his doghouse and the other characters behaving as they did for the last 50 years.

Lucy offered psychiatric advice, Charlie Brown fell while trying to kick

'the football, and Linus held on to his security blanket for dear life. Good grief! The Sunday comics just won't be the same.

Marrying Rich

Jumping on the "Millionaire" bandwagon, Fox will air a show at 8 p.m. Friday called "Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire?"

Fifty bachelorettes, selected based on criteria dictated by the bachelor, will vie for the hand of an unidentified millionaire. The show will gradually eliminate women from contention based on the bachelor's requirements. The grand finale will actually include an impromptu wedding between the lucky woman and the millionaire bachelor.

Who needs to win a million dollars when she can just marry into money? No word yet on who will pay for the couple's therapy bills.

Sweet Away

February sweeps has all the networks pulling out the big guns. Among the most notable, "Friends" will air a bizarre episode showing what life would be like for the cast if each had made one decision differently.

Last week's "ER" ended with Noah Wylie and Kelly Martin's characters stabbed by a loony patient. Rumor has it that Martin will breathe her last perky breath on this week's show.

Compiled by Lindsey Zuckerman

Men Are From Mars, Women Are Just Plain Stupid

"It goes back to something my grandmother told me when I was a kid.

'Holden,' she said 'The big bucks are in dick and fart jokes.' She was a churchgoer."

- Holden McNeil

Someone has been injecting my television with testosterone. And I like it.

Sure, Lifetime is still on the air, and don't even get me started on this new Oxygen network. But the fact remains, there is a show on the air right this very moment that chugs two beers before every commercial break and ends with footage of girls jumping on trampolines (pronounced, "tra-ma-bop-o-leens," to "The Simpsons" fan).

That's right, folks, I'm talking about "The Man Show." If you haven't seen it, I have just three words for you: It's the best!

With segments including "Household Tips From Adult Movie Stars," and "Movies That Guys Hate," the show refuses to pander to the weaker sex. In fact, it would seem as though the hosts, Jimmy Kimmel and Adam Corolla, actually try to offend women as much as humanly possible. Why? Because it's about time men reclaimed our sexuality!

And "The Man Show" is not alone. FX has "The X Show," and USA has "The Happy Hour" (although I'm not



DAVID POVILL DUTY CALLS

sure if that one counts — anyone who can sit through an hour with Dweezil Zappa can't be human, let alone male).

And that's just television. Look at a magazine rack these days. Men are faced with a barrage of breasts on every cover.

Men who were previously denied access to naked women because they were too embarrassed to ask the matronly woman behind the Quickie Mart counter for the new issue of Latvian Lesbians can now pick up any of a huge number of magazines chock-full of prime-time stars in late-night Skinemax poses.

Take Maxim, for example. Maxim, for those who have not yet encountered the journalistic masterpiece, is quite a gem.

Based on the premise that magazines are important tools for conveying poignant messages to vast audiences, Maxim contains no articles more than a page long, unless they are: 1) lists of women's sexual fantasies, 2) a chronology of the world's nastiest cases of sexually transmitted diseases or 3) the story of one man's quest to find a three-breasted woman.

All other stories are half a page or so and include such pearls of wisdom as a comparison of different bite-sized microwaveable snack foods and (I'm not making this up) "How to Train Your Monkey to Be Your Butler" (Because the ape's opposable thumb sits lower on the hand than does a human's, they're good with twist-top bottles, but not pop-top cans.)

Doesn't that sound great? Wouldn't you want to buy a magazine like that? Don't you want it so bad that you think Maxim should publish another spin-off magazine just like it and give it a name that only your monkey butler could have thought of? Well, you're in luck. Pick up an issue of Stuff.

Which brings me to an important point. Men, be careful who you choose to champion your chauvinistic revolution. If you dumb it down too much

(e.g. Zappa and Maxim writers), you risk being taken for a preschooler with a big mouth and a load in his pants.

So, for the sake of all the real men out there who aren't afraid to have a penis and do, in fact, have control of their bladders, I beg of you — please, vote Brian Bersticker for student body president.

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Ram Triple 967-8284. Double Jeopardy (R) 7:10, 9:30. The Messenger (R) 8:00. The Bachelor (PG13) 7:00, 9:15.

Carolina flicks. Foreign Weekend. Strictly Ballroom Tonight @ 9:00PM.

Cinema Paradiso. Friday @ 7:30PM. Saturday @ 10:00PM.

Buena Vista Social Club. Friday @ 10:00PM. Saturday @ 7:30PM.

Carolina. The Year's Best Film! Topsy-Turvy. New Times Start Fri, Feb 18. 7:30 nightly, Sat, Sun. at 1:30, 4:30.

Chelsea. Woody Allen's Best Picture in a Decade or More. Sweet and Lowdown. 7:10, 9:10, weekends 2:10, 4:20.

Golden Globe Winner. All About My Mother. The End of the Affair. 7:00, 9:20, weekends 2:00, 4:30.

Plaza Theatres. Hurricane. Scream 3. The Beach. Stuart Little. Girl Interrupted. Eye of the Beholder. Down to You. Movies at Timberlyne. Tiger. Magnolia. Angela's Ashes. Galaxy Quest. Snow Day. Scream 3.

Cat's Cradle. February. March. April. Shows @ GO! Rehearsal, Room 4. February 9-1400. 17 Th Sue Elliot. 18 FR OXES, Fin Fang Foam. 19 SA Daniel Carter w/ Saturnalia String Trio. 21 MO All Time Present, Glocksenspiel, Spool Ensemble. March 11 SA THE PROMISE RING. www.catscradle.com