



Weekend Excursion, a band that hails from nearby Greensboro, has made a mark on the college circuit. Its latest release, *Radioactive*, could earn the group attention even outside of its young following.

Sextet Set for Success With Latest Release

By FERRIS MORRISON
Staff Writer

Weekend Excursion has come a long way from its days as a high-school band playing in Greensboro clubs.

With its third release, *Radioactive*, the popular N.C. band has proven that it's time for the rest of the world to stand up and take notice of the talented sextet.

Weekend Excursion's original pop-rock sound has developed over the past couple of years, and the group's talents are artfully displayed throughout the album of songs on love and life.

The band's progressive pop sound proves it is on its way up from the college circuit and to national acclaim.

Sam Fisher might not be as beloved among old-school Weekend Excursion fans as former lead singer Aaron Shepard, but his talent complements the skills of the other band members.

Fisher's capable voice has a nice sound, but it could use some fine-tuning. The band's emotional lyrics in songs like "Better Man" demand a little more passion and soul.

"Break Away" includes guitar riffs from lead guitarist Chris Groch that not only complement the rest of the song's

elements but also add a unique melody.

Violinist Michael Ferry adds a little flavor to the ensemble with his classical, jazzy interludes woven into each song.

The violin adds an element of uniqueness to Weekend Excursion's sound, similar to bands like Dave Matthews Band, Jump Little Children and Ben Folds Five that include pianos, mandolins and other eclectic instruments in their music. By using beyond-the-mainstream instruments, their unusual sounds strengthen the band's fan base and add to their music.

Groch's hard electric guitar and Ferry's passionate violin create an interesting duo in "It's Never You," pairing well with the hardship and rapture that Weekend Excursion puts into its songs.

"Reunion" echoes the album's passion and makes anyone who's ever been in love tingle with ecstasy as it brings back memories of how that special someone in your life makes you feel.

Radioactive is sure to soon become what its title insinuates and begin receiving the air-time that it deserves.

The *Radioactive* release party is scheduled for April 27 at the Cat's Cradle in Carrboro. If you can't wait that long, the next time Weekend Excursion will be in the area is April 15 for its CD release party at Five Points Pub in Raleigh.

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

'El Dorado' Echoes Disney Animation Film Legacy

By MATT MANSFIELD
Staff Writer

If Dreamworks' "The Road to El Dorado" should excite people with all of its twists and turns on the path of adventure, why is the movie so similar to all other animated Disney movies?

Jeffrey Katzenberg, who rejuvenated Disney's animation flicks in the early 1990's, teamed up with other film greats to create Dreamworks in 1994. With the animator's help, writers Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio have united to create a movie basically designed to gross millions of dollars in merchandise sales like Katzenberg did with Disney. Unfortunately, Katzenberg and his company are still clinging to used-up ideas from his Disney days.

The plot begins with two Spaniards, Miguel (voice of Kenneth Branagh) and Tulio (voice of Kevin Kline), sneaking onto Cortes' America-bound ship with a map to El Dorado, the City of Gold.

The pair causes mischief, posing as gods when they finally discover the city, and their schtick personalities will entertain any 5-year-old in the audience.

But the parents sitting through the film will note that Dreamworks has drawn from Disney's animated movies for creative inspiration.

Tzekel-Kan (voice of Armand Assante), the mystical priest of El Dorado, takes his malevolent wizardry straight from "Aladdin's" Jafar manual. When he reads from his lurid book of

spells and prophecies, he seems to be reading Jafar's captivating foreword.

Elton John, along with lyricist Tim Rice, steps out of the Disney closet for the first time since "The Lion King."

True to Disney formula, this movie also includes some goofy animal side-kicks. However, the animals in this film add little. Dreamworks offers up a chivalrous Spanish war horse and an unmemorable armadillo, but these efforts at comic relief fall short.

The film's plot even recalls memories of "Pocahontas," with Europeans invading the New World, taking unfair advantage of the natives and finally learning to co-exist with the locals. Two imaginary Spanish characters keep history consistent while at the same time maintaining harmony between the colliding cultures.

Though just about everything in "The Road to El Dorado" mimics past Disney scripts, the animators of the film deserve creative acclaim. They take good advantage of the mystical aspect of Native American religions.

The high priest's potions have fantastic visual effects. In one instance, he uses a potion to synchronize his movements with a giant stone monster to crush Miguel and Tulio. When the potion takes effect, a neon green eruption bursts forth and surges electrical waves through the high priest's face, showing how sadistically powerful he can be.

Aside from its vivid animated imagery, "The Road to El Dorado" has the same tired Disney formula. Maybe Katzenberg should christen his new company with an original film recipe.

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.
Skylight Exchange, 405 1/2 W. Rosemary St., Chapel Hill, 933-5550.

Thursday, April 6

- Tim O'Brien & Songs from the Mountain at Cat's Cradle.
- The Platinum Heavyweights w/ Vessels of Sin at Local 506.
- Dr. Oakroot w/ Lisa at Skylight Exchange.
- Claire Holley at Go!

Friday, April 7

- Michelle Shocked & Her Mood Swingers at Cat's Cradle.
- This Bike is a Pipe Bomb, Mike III & David Dondero at Local 506.
- Skylight Special Concert Weekend w/ David Gans at Skylight Exchange.
- Of Montreal at Go!

Saturday, April 8

- Jerry Douglas at Cat's Cradle.
- Southern Culture on the Skids w/ Countdown Quartet and David Andrews

at Local 506.
Skylight Special Concert Weekend w/ David Gans at Skylight Exchange.
Lois w/ Kingsbury Manx at Go!
Virtuoso Concert Series featuring Kathleen Battle at Memorial Hall, UNC-CH campus, 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 9

- Dirty Three w/ Storm and Stress, Shannon Wright at Cat's Cradle.
- Twentieth-Century Music for Two Pianos: Bach-Feigen, Stravinsky, Tower and Debussy at Hill Hall auditorium.
- Gist w/ Mosquita Mite at Local 506.
- Brian Perry at Skylight Exchange.

Monday, April 10

- Open Mic Night at Skylight Exchange.

Tuesday, April 11

- The Bad Livers at Cat's Cradle.
- Pedro the Lion at Go!

Wednesday, April 12

- Funky Meters at Cat's Cradle.
- Johnny Young (Creed) w/ Down Cycle at Local 506.
- Open Mic Night at Skylight Exchange.
- Verbena, Marat at Go!

FILM

- "Classic Film Series from The Chapel Hill Historical Society." Film critics and UNC faculty discuss legendary cinematic performances following the movie. Carroll Hall, UNC campus, 7 p.m.
- Russell Banks, author of "Affliction," to speak as part of a panel discussion on film adaptations and screenwriting.

2 p.m. today. The discussion will be in the Commons Room in the James M. Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence at Graham Memorial.

ART

- "Impulse and Balance." Art quilts by Sue Versenyi and Pottery by Ferris Chandler. Through April 26. Chapel Hill Preservation Society, The Horace Williams House, 610 East Rosemary Street, 942-7818.
- "Public Art: A Symposium for Artists and the Public." Sponsored by UNC's Department of Art and the Weiss Urban Livability Program. The program includes performance by Project Bandaloop and Streetsigns Center for Literature and Performance. UNC and Franklin Street, 962-2901.

THEATER

- "After the Fall." LAB! Theater, 8:15 p.m. Friday through Monday, 5 p.m. Tuesday. Playmakers Theater. Free.
- "Improv Theater: Transactions Improv Co." 8 p.m. Saturday. The ArtsCenter, Carrboro. \$4, 929-2787.

PLAN AHEAD

- Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band April 22. Entertainment and Sports Arena, Raleigh, 834-4000.
- Widespread Panic April 29. Alltel Pavilion at Walnut Creek, 831-6666.
- "Cabaret." UNC Pauper Players. April 28 through April 30. Student Union Cabaret at UNC-CH, 962-4391.

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Ralph Grizzle
will speak on

Remembering Charles Kuralt

Thursday, April 6 at 3:30pm

Grizzle was commissioned by UNC to conduct a series of oral histories with Kuralt's friends, family and colleagues. Based on nearly 100 interviews with Kuralt, his friends, family and colleagues, **Remembering Charles Kuralt** is the remarkable tale of a North Carolina farm boy who went on to become one of America's most admired television journalists. Grizzle is a contributing editor to North Carolina's *Our State* magazine.

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