# **DIVERSIONS Music**

BRIEFS

Shadowboxers: The Break It was probably too ambitious to

On the positive side, Shadowboxers

sound like music, and it does express a

of bands never really reach.

beat pop rock college band.



the album evokes the feel that they've been together much longer, maybe since the 1960s.

The band's sound has changed over the years, and the emergent result is what the group calls a mixture of light-hearted pop and Southern gothic psychedelia.

Repeating simple lyrics like "We could be happy," and somehow making an interesting song out of it, provides for a quirky, light-hearted album. On another note, the song "It's a Wicked World" has an ambient, hypno-tizing sound earning the hand account

tizing sound, earning the band acco-lades and the mysterious "Southern gothic" label.

I Need You maintains an almost surreal feel throughout, with surprising musi-cal moments at every turn. Meanwhile, the album keeps a sense of purpose, dri-ving ahead as if it has a definite destina-

Maybe with I Need You the band will get a taste of national fame. And if not, it doesn't change the fact that this is a band with real vision, real talent and a damn good album to add to your collection.

Compiled by Carl Jacobs



Shadowboxers, a band composed entirely of UNC students, makes its debut with The Break. From left to right: Ben Vincent, Nathan Mayberry and Brian Rouse.



On Elliot Smith's latest outing, *Figure 8*, the oft-praised pop craftsman ditches melodical subtlety in favor of symphony.

# **Elliot Smith Mimics Beatles'** Pop Style, Loses Substance

## By JOSH LOVE

With his bittersweet juxtaposition of cynicism and melodic sublimity. Elliot Smith often evokes that legendary yinand yang between John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles. Arrao G As rock lore dictates, McCartney

needed Lennon's caustic, impassioned

intellect to complement CD REVIEW his masterful **Elliot Smith** pop sense, and Figure 8 thus without Lennon his solo albums, as well as those

with his band Wings, sound closer to Billy Joel than *Rubber Soul*.

Note the crucial give-and-take within that unparalleled Beatle duo, because on Figure 8, Elliot Smith veers dangerously close to an overdose on style over-substance melodic sheen that could only be termed McCartneyesque.

Granted, Smith's observation that "the spin of the earth impaled a silhouette of the sun on the steeple" resonates far longer than McCartneyisms such as "I know a tiny waterfall/A magic little place/Where we can play together/And watch the fishes race."

Lyrical dissections aside, Smith truly combines a sophisticated knack for pop craft with thumbnail-sketched intro spection. When he seeks to capture the shades of gray within and between the particular emotions of heartache, lone-liness and loss, Smith has few peers.

The confessionals "Somebody That I Used to Know" and "I Better Be Quiet Now" showcase Smith's softly plaintive voice with the most beautifully intricate guitar lines this side of Nick Drake.

The former serves as a spiritual off-

spring of Bob Dylan's indifferent kiss-offs, while the latter captures the thoughts of the brokenhearted in perfect miniature, with offhandedly pointed lines like "a lot of hours to occupy, it

was easy when I didn't know you yet." With acoustic balladry mastered to a science, Smith invests much of Figure 8 in the marriage of this fragile folk aesthetic to his ornate pop sensibilities. Unfortunately, the pained whispers that resound above equally delicate guitar work evaporate underneath layers of strings, guitars, and psychedelic drums.

Even worse, this symphonic maelstrom often renders Smith insincere or inadequate in his vocal pleas, a fate that also befalls the post-Beatle McCartney.

The sly smirk of a spare number like "Somebody That I Used to Know" comes through loud and clear, but on the sonically complex "Wouldn't Mama Be Proud" Smith wastes a terrifically bit-ter line like "there's a silver lining in the corporate cloud" with a half-interested vocal delivery. Just imagine what Lennon could have done with that one.

However, when Smith drops the per-etual-gloom act and indulges in flights of lyrical whimsy, the gleeful strange-

ness of his music perfectly follows suit. An after-hours feel pervades the playful "In the Lost and Found," which ironically near-nicks a line ("day breaks and every morning when he wakes he thinks of you") from McCartney's Beatle-era classic "For No One."

Forgive Smith for his occasional Beatle thievery, but if he ever bites from Wings' "Silly Love Songs," be afraid.

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

# **Chapel Hill Quartet Gives Jazz a Unique Twist**

The struc-ture of the album further

highlights the

band's generic nature. Song 1: funky, off-beat rock (but prob-ably the best in

album)

Song 2: Funky, **ITT** 

(pretty catchy). Continue this pattern until song six, where we get the token love song that at

least one girl thinks is kind of sweet. On the whole, the music sounds a lit-

tle hollow and not very well thought out. But maybe after a few more rounds

on the frat party circuit and some time

at Go! Studios and the band will be ready to take another stab at becoming

Jennyanykind's I Need You is a rarity,

with a depth in musical arrangement and mood that has already drawn

numerous comparisons to Lou Reed. The Chapel Hill-based band has

been playing together for six years, but

the next big thing on the music scene

Jennyanykind: I Need You

the

MUSIC BRIEFS

Shadowboxers

The Break

#### BY MATT MANSFIELD Staff Write

Louis Matza, a man who was trying to create jazz-punk music around the time Nirvana was in full bloom, can turn a three-chord rock song into a 40-chord jazz melody with Cobain-esque

"I really wanted to get back to jazz "I really wanted to get back to jazz because that's what challenges me," Matza said, talking about the music of his locally based jazz quartet, The

Foolish Things. When Matza's old trio, Glass, broke up, The Foolish Things materialized as a jazz quartet.

The sultry singing of Dottie Bea and talented drumming of Ian Schreier join Matza's guitar and Glass member David Abbott's unconventional viola di gamba. "It looks like a cello," Matza said,

referring to the viola di gamba. With seven strings, it has versatility where the cello cannot deliver. "You can play three strings at a time," Matza said. "You can't do that on a cello."

Chapel Hill is the viola di gamba capital of the country, Matza claimed. UNC music Professor Brent Wissick puts on a viola di gamba concert every spring, with Abbott second in com-

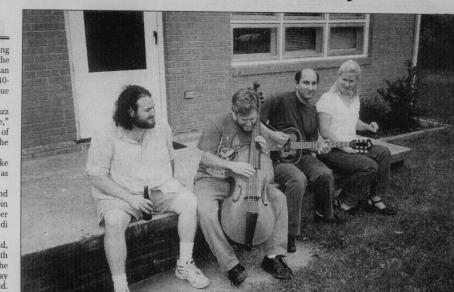
The event may not attract people from miles around, but it does give Abbott the chance to show off his talents. On May 4, The Foolish Things will close the concert, proving that Abbott's position has its perks.

Besides the use of the viola di gamba, Matza confessed what makes the band unique from other local jazz bands: "We're not as good." None of the members are jazz virtuosos – Abbott's exper-tise lies in classical music. Matza learned the guitar at the tired age of 20, and Bea just started singing jazz this

But despite Matza's modesty, the band proves talented as it turns rock tunes into nearly unrecognizable jazz

Take guitar icon Jimi Hendrix's "Fire," for example. The immortal song courses with electric energy, but the group's rendition metamorphosizes it into a smooth jazz number that one might hear in smoky clubs on the seedy side of town.

"To me, a chord gets interesting when you have that fourth or fifth note," he explained, his eyes lighting up as he talked of playing beyond a three-note chord. The Foolish Things' penchant for



The Foolish Things, a local jazz quartet with a penchant for transforming rock songs into complex jazz compositions, will perform Friday at Café Driade on East Franklin Street.

transforming any rock song into a com-plex jazz composition could make Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb" sound upbeat and groovy. "So, even if we can't be virtuosos at

it, we can write songs that bring some-thing different to the music world," Matza said.

But this is not only a band that makes rock songs roll with a jazzy tune; it also plays original songs and straight jazz numbers. "We tend to swing in a laughable way," Matza said. The band prides itself on its foolish-

ness and its members don't take them-selves too seriously, hence the quartet's

"Humor is something most popular usic has lost," he said. However, Matza believes the band's

music can evoke a myriad of emotions, including serious ones. "I think the purpose of using jazzy chord progressions is not for the sake of complexity, but I think you just com-municate different kinds of moods," he

said.

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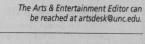
Matza even philosophized for a moment on the notion of time as ephemeral, and how The Foolish Things

"You can't look at music and hold it because as soon as you do, that beat is gone," Matza said.

In addition to the quartet's May 4 performance, The Foolish Things will play Friday at Café Driade, a coffee shop on East Franklin Street.

be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu









#### TODAY

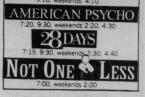
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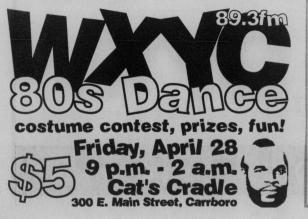


SATURDAY, APRIL 29 Alpha's Greek Freak!









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