

Record Shows Bring Out Fanatics, Obscure Gems

By JOSH LOVE
Staff Writer

You think you know music. You've transcended Carson Daly's idea of what's cool (maybe that new BSB video isn't so slammin' after all).

You take your music seriously, and you feel pretty fortunate that you discovered Phish or Coldplay or De La Soul, because you've saved yourself from a lifetime of TRL purgatory. Now you safely boast among your less-enlightened friends that you know music.

You may count yourself as one of those knowledgeable few — until you meet people like Letitia Walker and Whitney Shroyer and realize you still have a hell of a lot to learn.

Co-proprietors of the Asheville-based Whizz Records, Walker and Shroyer were playing their wares at the Raleigh Record-and CD Show, held April 1 at the Four Points Hotel.

It's the regional record shows like this one where obsessive audiophiles come

to haggle over the price of "deleted Smiths singles and original, not reissue, Frank Zappa albums," as John Cusack observed in last year's celebration of music fetishists "High Fidelity."

The success of that film might have given record junkies a stamp of cool, but it's business as usual on the record show circuit — the business of music fanaticism.

Walker will debate the aesthetic merits of an Allman Brothers Band record cover, and Shroyer will explain the overlooked genius of swamp soulman Raw Spitt. All in a day's work.

"If you want to make music your passion, then don't limit your sources or your options," Walker said. "If you consider yourself a real music lover, then you've got to go out and buy CDs, buy records, just try and hear everything that you can."

That's no small feat even if you were to limit your options just to the Raleigh show, with roughly a dozen dealers but thousands upon thousands of albums.

Wedged somewhere inside those bins, hard-to-find records await the appraisal of collectors, completists, obsessives and guys who should get rid of a couple thousand records before buying a thousand more but just can't live without a copy of Emmylou Harris' out-of-print first album.

But the question remains — when it comes to the music you've never heard of, how do you separate the junk from Three Souls on my Mind, a band that Walker lauds as the Mexican Rolling Stones?

"You learn to develop the instincts to come across something you don't know about and realize this is what will give me the greatest reward, either aesthetic or financial," Shroyer said.

That distinction between a good listen and a good investment seems to separate Shroyer and Walker from several of the other vendors, several of whom specialize in high-end collectibles rather than cheaper but still obscure vinyl.

"The records we prize most of all are the ones that just continue to give every

time you listen to them," Shroyer said. "Like this Raw Spitt album, it's just this great nationalistic social protest record, maybe the angriest soul album ever."

On the surface, not much is changed when the vendors pack up and head back to their stores or on to the next show.

Everyone at the show sold a few extra records to make room for that next Holy Grail, that undiscovered three minutes of pure pop heaven from some long-forgotten teenage garage band. That's what drives record junkies past the point where the rest just give up and settle for Everclear or Dave Matthews Band or Pavement.

"We don't discriminate against something just because it's popular, but at the same time we won't champion something if it's mediocre," Walker said. "We just search for things that are really good, and sometimes those things happen to be really hard to find."

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

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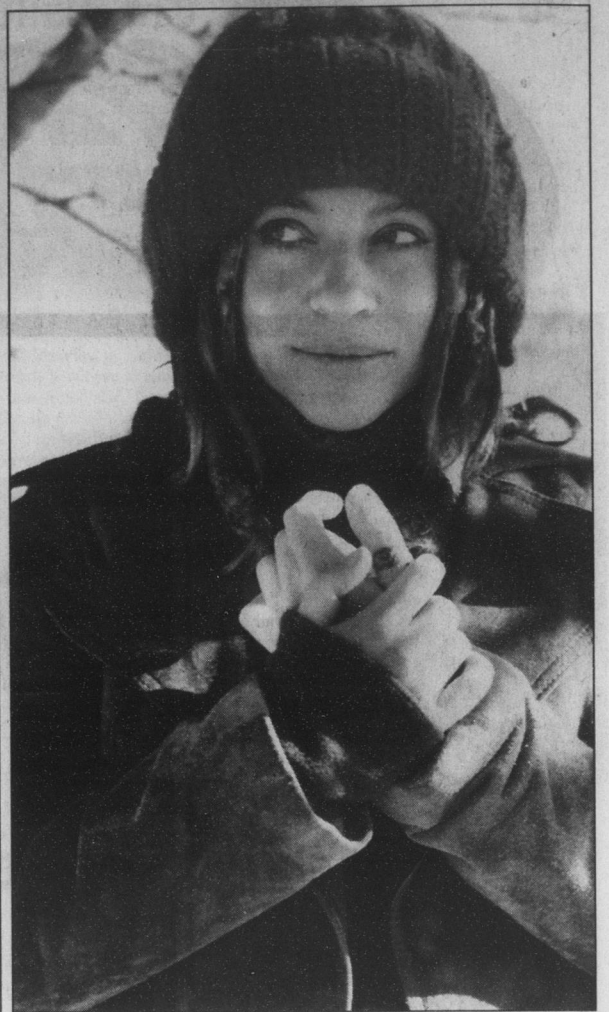


PHOTO COURTESY OF RIGHTEOUS BABE RECORDS
Ani DiFranco's latest, *Reveling/Reckoning*, goes heavy on horns as the singer-songwriter explores new musical territory. The double disc is the perseverant DiFranco's 13th release.

'Chunhyang' Offends Western Ears, but Not Sensibilities

By JASON ARTHURS
Staff Writer

It was stupid, I admit, to fail to realize that a movie with a title like "Chunhyang" would be a Korean drama with English subtitles. But I refuse to take credit for the interludes of shrieks known as — upon further investigation — "pansori."

Pansori is the traditional narrative stage that includes storytelling/singing to the beat (an ever-so random beat, may I add) of a drum. I don't doubt that trained ears find this art pleasing, but to the uncultured Westerner, it grates like

nails on a chalkboard.

This is how it works: every scene of the play is interrupted by a man "singing" (although he sounds more like he's vomiting a pair of antlers) the narration of the plot.

Sometimes, he even "sings" the words for the characters while they act out the action. It reminds me of opera, that is, if it were performed by dying monkeys.

"Chunhyang," as far as the plot goes, is best explained by a fusion of some of the classic few minutes in entertainment and literary history. Stay with me on this:

Siddhartha
Mongryong (Cho Seung Woo), or Master Lee as his servants call him, decides he wants to leave the isolated extravagance of the governor's (his

dad's) mansion to see the world. Only he doesn't find self-enlightenment, he finds a girl. And he comes right back home.

Romeo and Juliet
Master Lee sees a young courtesan named Chunhyang (Lee Hyo Jung) and immediately falls in love with her. The problem is, they are star-crossed lovers — members of two different social classes whose marriage will never be acceptable.

The Princess Bride
Westley, I mean Mongryong, seemingly abandons Chunhyang — despite proclaiming his undying love for her. When he returns years later, she doesn't recognize him (see "Oh my sweet Westley, what have I done?").

Robin Hood — Prince of Thieves

Not to give away the ending, but when the new governor wants to have his way with Chunhyang, it calls for the triumphant return of Mongryong — disguised as a man that steals from the rich and gives to the poor.

Despite the distracting musical narration, the performances by Jung and Woo are exceptional, and they do a decent job of carrying the movie. An especially solid scene for Jung was when her character was being beaten for disobedience at the order of the new governor.

Overall, I learned two things from this movie. One, pansori and film do not mix. Two, the love for feel-good romance movies is universal.

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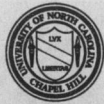
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