Damnwells Greet Fans as Friends in Almost Empty De La Luz

BY TOM PREVITE

Who says you need a huge venue with a throng of listeners to put on a good show?

The Damnwells performed Thursday at De La Luz in Carrboro before a group numbers could be counted review/

on two hands. But that didn't The Damnwells phase the band De La Luz Thursday, Feb. 27 ★★☆☆ from Brooklyn, N.Y. In fact, the Brooklyn, musicians pre-ferred it that way.

They played without caring about who was watching or really if anyone was watching at all. It was almost as if they were practicing in their garage and a few friends happened to stumble in on the jam session in progress. The anonymity one usually feels at a

concert was dissolved as The Damnwells took the time between songs to get to know each audience member

Ted, Dave, Steven and Alex, as the band members liked to be called, offered the crowd touring anecdotes, jokes and even beers.

They showed genuine gratitude to those who braved the miserable weath-The appearance of the band members helped establish a relaxed and inti-

mate atmosphere.

Each of the musicians sported clothing more suited for a Thursday evening

performance.
In fact, The Damnwells easily could have been a group of your friends. The band's music shed light on life lessons – concerning everything from love to religion – that everyone must learn. Lyrics were like advice given over a beer instead of preaching or wailing about

unapproachable pain.

The group's style was a blend of multiple rock genres with a melancholic undertone.

Some tunes featured soft rock rhythms with a hint of blues guitar. Other songs were harder, taking bits and

pieces from grunge.

But all of the music was full of the

ssion of experience. Vocalist Alex Dezen's voice was clear

and crisp with a slightly raspy tone to it, which was well-suited to the emotional atmosphere the band was trying to establish.

The singer took extra care in delivering his vocals, for they contained a degree of angst that stirred the blood rather than raised eyebrows and sighs of

The lyrics flowed smoothly enough: "I've got a bright idea/Give me your money and I'll take all your pain/Come here every Sunday and I'll keep Satan away/If you go away, go astray, there will be darkness for you." will be darkness for you."

Dezen pronounced this passage with

all the emotion and intensity of Kurt Cobain on "All Apologies." While the performance was enter-taining, The Damnwells exhibited some

irritating quirks.

During some songs, the guitarists would turn around, walk to the drummer and face him. With the small space taken up by De La Luz's stage, this caused the band to crowd together and look awkward.

Also, the vocals drowned out when a couple of the louder songs reached the peaks of their intensity. But these small-scale flaws took little away from an otherwise strong concert.

The next time the Damnwells come into town, try to catch their show. After it ends, you just might find yourself sit-ting in the back room and sipping drinks

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

recommends

By Philip McFee

■ Anthony Burgess, "A Clockwork Orange" All right, malchecks and devotchkas (boys and girls) – you've probably seen the sinny (movie) and think it's all horrorshow ultraviolence (good but senseless filth). Not so, my brothers the book will razrez your malenky rassoodocks (rip your little minds).

■ "Mr. Vampire" Hong Kong cinema at its worst is entertainment at its best. Be on the lookout for terrible dubbing, unexplained dancing and, above all, those bunny-hopping

■ Bad Religion It's the smartest punk band out there, headed for more than 20 years by Ph.D.-holder Greg Graffin. Listen to the lyrics, and come to know the true meaning of "thesaurus rock."

■ Yoshitaka Amano He's a legendary Japanese artist whose résumé goes far beyond the character design for "Vampire Hunter D." Rich, dark color and themes are present in all of

bis surreal fantasy paintings.

"Fight Club" soundtrack
The only full release from the Dust
Brothers, their electronic score has enough atmosphere to stand alone. Songs are divided into sections – almost movements – giving the album around 30 different riffs.

> Philip McFee can be reached at pip@email.unc.edu.

Pulitzer-Prize Winning Author Captures Darkness, Visits Durham

BY PHILIP, MCFEE

In his introduction to Viking Press' 1992 book "The Granta Book of the American Short Story," Richard Ford confesses, "I don't know why people

"A Multitude of

Then why read review/ them? Ford presents a fine reason to do so in his latest collection of short fiction, "A Multitude of Sins.

A former UNC Morgan Writer in Residence, Ford was awarded the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for his novel "Independence Day." "A Multitude of Sins," a New York Times Notable Book, is Ford's third short story compilation.

The book delivers what it advertises plenty of sin. All 10 pieces (nine shorts and the novella-length "Abyss") center on wrongdoing.

But don't come looking for a variety of transgressions - adultery is the insidous act of choice, and Ford explores it

in depth.

In "Quality Time," secret lovers discover the distance between each other and the remoteness within themselves in

a frigid Chicago setting.
As a man watches a stranger undress across a wintry cityscape in "Privacy," he begins to understand desire and lone-

Throughout "A Multitude of Sins," cold settings are overshadowed by the frigidity of the characters' thoughts.

weight. When it comes to describing the bleakness of modern American life, he's one of the best there is

Many authors struggle to capture the apathy of an urban setting or the emptiness of an open road.

Ford is a master of setting and emo-

tion, establishing both with concise but lyrical descriptions. His style keeps his stories from ballooning, a problem that plagues many writers.

A reporter in one story states, "Deception (is) very American." This notion is echoed constantly in Ford's writing. "A Multitude of Sins" is all about the sting of life in both thought and action.

The pain is total, regardless of the source. None of Ford's characters

(DAT)

emerge from their respective situations

Sexual alienation and isolation are portrayed without the type of excess that has marked the work of John Irving or Rick Moody (known for his graphic 1994 adultery fest "The Ice Storm"). Ford's handling of social decay also is done simply and clearly, without the pretensions of Jonathan Franzen.

Ford wastes no words, and his final product is sad, insightful, clean and ntertaining.

Understated but skillfully written, Ford's descriptions include such gems as, "so picturesque and clear and pristine as to be painful," coming from a man

long and complex, but the reader never

(GRE)

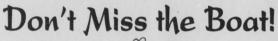
is distracted from the core of each story. In all of the pieces, Ford's prose is as clear as his cautionary mess

Accomplishing so much in so little space, Ford's stories are strong examples of efficient, powerful prose.

The market of mega-novels frequently falls victim to excessive emotional ramble. Ford's tales of sin forgive that trespass, delivering readers from evil in

Ford will be reading from his novel at p.m. Friday at the Regulator Book Shop in Durham. There will be a brief question-and-answer session afterwards. Admission in free, and the reading is open to the public

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





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menting a tourist-geared Maine.

Many of the author's sentences are

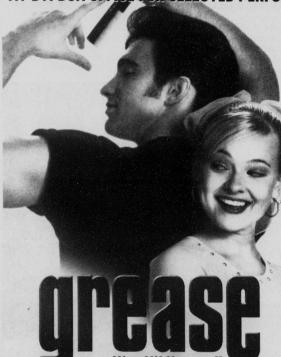
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