

DIVE RECOMMENDS

Mineral, *The Power of Failing* Pure catharsis. *The Power of Failing* is one of the most dynamic, emotionally wrought records of all time. Guitars alternate between harsh squealing and hushed chording. Drums plod, gallop, then plod again. And all the while, Chris Simpson's syrupy vocals drench the lulling tryst.

"Parking Lot" might have been an underground hit, but "Take the Picture Now" is the standout — a three minute exercise in personifying beauty.

"Superstarlet A.D." Here it is: the apocalypse has come, and in the fallout, men have de-evolved into Neanderthals. Meanwhile, in the city of Memphis, women have arranged themselves into cults centering around hair color and porn. Yes, porn.

Sure, like most Troma-associated films, "Superstarlet A.D." might boast a rather outlandish plot. But the oversexed romp is, at the very least, an enjoyable burlesque voyage into nonsense and hilarity.

John Mayer, *Any Piece of Crap The Tool Ever Wrote* In appreciating music, it's important to know the enemy. As exhausting an endeavor as it might be, to truly love the great stuff, you have to have a proper grasp on what it is that makes the trash so damn horrible.

And Mayer is the worst, really. Artistically bankrupt, his polite acoustic ditties scrape the very bottom of the emotional barrel.

Mayer's songs are transparent — the dreadful distillation of all things that lie in the heart of the mundane, polished, generic and derivative junk that makes its way across the badlands of pop radio.

Contact Robbie Mackey at robmac@email.unc.edu.

Lambchop shake and bake on dual LPs

BY KEMP BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Sweepingly cinematic, yet decidedly for the art-house crowd, Lambchop's new LP *Aw C'mon* wanders through a sonic narrative.

Although labeled alt-country, probably due to its Nashville origins, Lambchop is genre-evasive.

Here the band has assembled fearlessly an album comfortably lying in a mixture of soul, soft rock and country all backed by an orchestra — but it doesn't sound directionless.

Surprisingly, the genre shifting and intermingling creates one of the most cohesive albums in a long time.

The lyrics bounce through subject matter aimlessly without clear direction, which is odd for such a tightly wrought album. And only through form does *Aw C'mon* find what sounds like a melancholy love story — with its manic highs and depressed lows — swept away in strings and unorthodox vocals.

But maybe this is because Lambchop isn't telling normal stories but drawing connections to a series of vignettes creating a larger picture of life.

Either way, *Aw C'mon* is a pop oddity moving in musical motifs rather than lyrical progression of the formulaic three-and-a-half minute song that works along the patchwork line of verse-chorus-verse. Kurt Wagner writes lyrics that rarely rhyme and have stanzas instead of verses and choruses.

The lack of lyrical conventionality is never

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LAMBCHOP
AW C'MON

★★★★☆

disturbing. The tightly composed songs and tactful placement of playfully mirthful instrumentals, such as "Being Tyler," float you through Wagner's digressions.

Musicality is of utmost import to the album. Lambchop treats instrumentation the way The Beach Boys would have if Van Morrison was sitting in on *Pet Sounds*.

The product is happier Nick Drake-esque melody lines with a delicate orchestra harmonizing.

Added to more than half of the 12 songs is Wagner's mellow crooning. Somewhere between Johnny Cash and Solomon Burke, Wagner's voice chimes in sounding like a Cat Stevens that converted to a hybrid form of Motown rather than a sect of Islam.

It ends like most epic films — flawed. But this should not discredit the group's near masterful achievement.

The last songs just don't advance the narrative swing. They're decent, over-written songs, not mediocre, but they don't have the same captivating sonic rise and fall of the previous 10 tracks.

Lambchop tries to say too much when the music already has told us.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

BY JACKIE RANDELL
STAFF WRITER

No, You C'mon is the latter of Lambchop's recent release of two LPs and is in dialogue with *Aw C'mon*.

Releasing two albums as extensions of one another has been in vogue lately. Ryan Adams released the EPs *Love is Hell* and *Love is Hell, Pt. 2* in quick succession, and we're still awaiting *Want Two* from Rufus Wainwright in response to *Want One*.

But don't take *No, You C'mon's* retaliatory status as indicative of an afterthought album made with the intention of preserving Lambchop's leftovers.

Disc two of the band's double release embodies all its eclectic musical inclinations without apologies.

It's been dubbed alternative country, chamber pop and indie rock, but Lambchop ducks all labeling.

It's a cocktail of genres, highlighted by vocal narratives, instrumental tracks that are reminiscent of lounge music and orchestral backdrops.

As the band hails from Nashville, Tenn., some undoubtedly country music influences are present, but the rotating cast of members ensures that it remains a fusion of musical styles.

The vocals, mainly by George Woods, are a blend of Ian Curtis and Barry White, which is fitting because Woods was a member of a soul funk band in Nashville before he contributed to *No, You C'mon*.

"Shang a Dang Dang" is the most apparent throwback to the soul funk era, undeni-

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LAMBCHOP
NO, YOU C'MON

★★★

ably influenced by the likes of Parliament.

Woods' sultry rumble oddly accompanies some of the lyrics, such as in the irony-saturated track "The Problem."

"When the chimp on the tree/ Shakes his fist at me/ You know I love it/ Cause it means that much to me/ And my nuts knows it's not/ In a bid to reach the top."

Other tracks lack lyrics entirely. "Sunrise" is an instrumental track — something you'd expect to hear as the musical accompaniment to one of the cheesy disco scenes in "Boogie Nights."

Suffice it to say that the tracks less geared toward elevator entertainment are the album's stronger points.

This album is perfect for those times when you're feeling pretentiously open to all music genres — great background music for intellectual musings over your favorite latte.

If you can appreciate an eccentric sound, lacking any of the conventions that make pop music catchy, you'll enjoy *No, You C'mon*.

To a discerning listener well-versed in the indie rock scene, this Lambchop is well done.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

STAR SYSTEM

- ★ POOR
- ★★ FAIR
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★★★ EXCELLENT
- ★★★★★ CLASSIC

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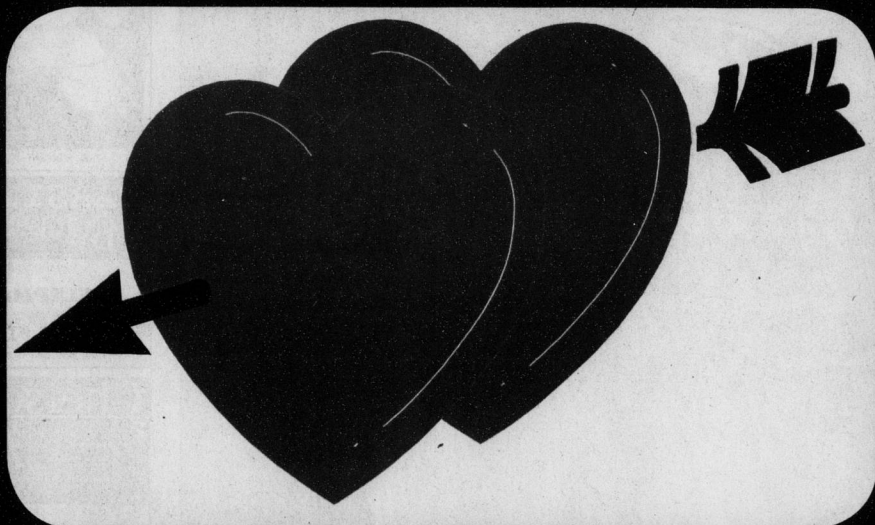
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