The Daily Tar Heel

Arts

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Premise tarnishes 'Stepford' Legendary Harvey

All-star crew can't save poor remake

BY KRISTEN WILLIAMS SENIOR WRITER

Keep Oprah and Stedman away from Stepford or she might pack on the pounds again with all the cupcakes she'd bake for the pair.

Unlike the almighty O, the Stepford wives can't escape their domestic destinies – to eternally slave away for their geeky hus-bands in '50s chic fashions.

The Stepford Wives," a remake of the 1975 science fiction flick of the same title, boasts a strong cast for a less-than-sturdy film.

Starring veteran actors Glenn Close, Christopher Walken, Bette Midler, Matthew Broderick and Nicole Kidman, the cast echoes the film's themes — looks can be

deceiving. While it appears the ensemble would be able to keep the clunky script afloat, some wife forgot to blow up the water wings when she

was building her empire. Could it have been Kidman's character? As Joanna, Kidman is washed-out — even more so in her "career woman" black ensembles - rail thin and ambitious.

The kind of woman whose impressive résumé has "wife and mother" at the bottom of the list, if at all.

After she is fired and endures a subsequent meltdown, her hus-band Walter (Broderick) suggests she might benefit from a change of venue.

Joanna, et. al, relocate to Stepford, a gated Conncecticut town where all the wives are shiny, smiling and perfect. She attempts to blend in and joins the clean-cut crew of Bobbi (Midler) and resident gay character Roger (Roger Bart), as the three native New Yorkers attempt to cling to their cynicism and personalities in the altered town. The cast delivers its lines with

ease and achieves the intended results, but the film's dark humor might be lost on certain audiences.

The concept of streamlining a spouse appeals to Walter, who's been left in the shadows of his wife's success, but Broderick's performance is more convincing as the whipped husband rather than one seeking a leg up in the rela-

tionship. The jokes, however, might fall flat as the humor goes over the

BY MICHAEL PUCCI

in Radiohead's footsteps.

Coldplay" label.

Never mind that the two bands

take notably different musical

approaches – every popular band has its disciples, and for Radiohead, Coldplay – at least in



COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Christopher Walken assures the apprehensive Matthew Broderick that there is life after "Inspector Gadget" in the woeful throwback "The Stepford Wives." A coterie of seasoned stars fails to salvage the schlocky film.

MOVIEREVIEW **"THE STEPFORD WIVES"** **

heads of audience members who probably don't even realize that it draws its appeal from campy throwback.

Often the humor is subtle and snide, but screenwriter Paul Rudnik rests on his laurels with a few jokes — expect the stereotypi-cal gay and blond jokes — to elicit laughter.

One of the most humorous ele-ments of the film is David Arnold's

match the superficiality of the characters and maintains "Edward Scissorhands"-esque undertones that enhance the darkness of the

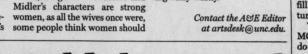
The entire film is chock-full of flaws. It's not the kind of movie that you'll want to run out and buy. The film's themes are beaten over the audience's head, treating viewers as if they too are no more than a dazed Stepford wife.

OK, we get it – Joanna's and ing wishy-washy. Midler's characters are strong

score, which is both lilting to be back in the kitchen and men are all still little boys at heart, as evidenced by the toys, cars and enhanced wives with upgraded bust lines.

Audiences should look beyond the appeal of the headlining actors, save their money and rent anoth-er flick starring any of these film

greats. Or else you could leave the theater feeling like a shorted out Stepford wife, twitching and feel-



gets soft on 6th LP

BY JENNIFER SAMUELS R WRITER

PJ Harvey has been called many things during her career. Feminist. Punk-rock guitar god-

dess. Patron saint for angry women

everywhere. These are apt descriptions, but Harvey is a more creative artist than any of the above indicate. She's a versatile performer who produces albums that are emo-

tional without dripping sentiment. Uh Huh Her, Harvey's sixth LP, is no exception. The multi-talented artist was responsible for vocals and most instrumentation.

She crafted the liner notes from chopped-up pieces of her diary, and the candid photos that accompany the snippets will please her rabid fans.

And while the album lacks the polish of 2000's Stories From the City, Stories From the Sea, it benefits greatly from Harvey's mini-

malist approach. Uh Huh Her is an ode to that omnipresent muse for musicians — busted relationships. Released on the heels of Harvey's latest breakup with actor Vincent Gallo, the songs

embody Harvey's meditations on what she needs to be happy. She asserts her independence on the album's strongest track, "Shame." Smokey vocals are layered over a pulsing drum beat, as Harvey sings of breaking free from an all-consuming relationship. "I'd jump for you into the fire/

MUSICREVIEW PJ HARVEY UH HUH HER ****

I'd jump for you into the flame/ Tried to go forward with my life/ I just feel shame, shame, shame." The tracks on Uh Huh Her

range from quiet to quieter, with one noteable exception. "Who the Fuck," a caustic tune characterized by brash vocals and grunted expletives, is out of place amid more melodic tunes.

Harvey's anger is appreciated, but be prepared to hit track

advance after about 30 seconds. Perhaps the most interesting element of the album is Harvey inclusion of two instrumental tracks.

One, a brief interlude between the album's final two songs, is nothing but bird calls. The second, called "The End," is

dedicated to Gallo. Harvey plucks a simple melody on her guitar as a solemn accordion drones in the background. It's a downer, and even without knowing the track's origins, it conveys a clear message of sadness.

Harvey doesn't break much new ground with Uh Huh Her, but like her previous works, it's a road worth traveling.

> Contact the ASE Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Wu-Tang vibes surface on slapdash Killa LP

BY PHILIP MCFEE

NIOR WRITER Jeez, what is it about the Wu-Tang Clan? Really – what makes everyone keep coming back to the 36 Chambers?

It's not Wu-Wear or The Trials and Tribulations of Bobby Jones, and it's definitely not the Method Man-Limp Bizkit collaboration "N2Gether Now." All together, the Wu panache

comes from a mix of grit and charm, credibility and the ability to fill any lyrical gap with a pop cul-ture name drop. Don Rickles. This year, the nine Brooklyn

MCs have anounced they'll one day do the inevitable — break up when no longer able to continue making music - a statement as obvious as it is ominous.

To balance out the blues, the collective recently has spawned a strong batch of solo releases, the most recent being No Said Date, an LP from Elgin Turner, formerly High Chief and Jamel Irief, now simply Masta Killa.

Similar to the fresh Ghostface album, it showcases some strong cuts, but takes a hit from its share of uneven sequencing. Rip Torn. GZA and Raekwon have shown

their solo mettle. RZA helped with the "Kill Bill" soundtracks.

But no Wu-Tang album is a lone MC's effort. Masta Killa's record touts tracks from a handful of producers, including a clutch put through by Bobby Digital himself, complete with his trademark Bmovie samples and Eastern-influ-enced backbeats. Grover.

MUSICREVIEW MASTA KILLA NO SAID DATE ***

No Said Date is a patchy effort, though, evidenced by tracks like the Brock-produced "Grab the Microphone," which features a near-miss minimal beat over which Killa spits a typical Wu line. "Support it with a physical frame, imperial Asiatic material/

Scratch the serial, smoking him, he onna need a miracle." Wait. What? (Kenny G.)

Free-association aside, the album's meat comes from the instrumental end, not the oblique rhymes.

Standouts such as the cuts produced by Wu-Tang stalwart Mathematics, along with the RZA's work on the title track and "School," make up for any shortcomings.

Try a line from the latter on for size — "Bangin' on the lunchroom table, I used to spectate/ And watch some of the MC greats/ Throw verses back and forth, I didn't have the heart to step forth/ I used to take it home to write some of my own.

Masta Killa's completed the 12step program to coherent lyrics. Hear that, ODB?

Ling-Ling. The Wu-Tang Clan isn't dead et, and, for now, Masta Killa does justice to the 'Chamber.

Contact the ASE Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

MUSICREVIEW KEANE HOPES AND FEARS When Coldplay introduced themselves to the mainstream with the strangely beautiful "Yellow," *** critical consensus held that this group was the chosen one to follow

which feature the band members looking plaintive and introspective.

And there are the pedestrian lyrics, words so bland that they belie lead singer Tom Chaplin's impassioned delivery: "You think your days are ordinary/And no one ever thinks about you/But we're all the same.

critics' eyes — was one of them. Fast forward a few years, and recalls ABBA's "Dancing Queen' The dainty opener, "Somewhere Only We Know," establishes the formula for the rest of the LP. A but doesn't explore it enough now Coldplay finds itself in pop the song moves along precisely as music's major leagues, and quite accordingly, critics are scrambling you'd expect. subdued verse superficially sets up the narrator's frustrations with the If it cares to improve, Keane to find a band that fits the "new should avoid the rigid radio-oriopposite sex, builds up to a majes-Enter Keane, a piano-driven trio, ented structure of songs such as with its debut LP, Hopes and Fears. Yes, if you like Coldplay, "Bend and Break" in favor of the tic chorus, includes a couple choice hooks and inspirational lyrics to tic chorus, includes a coupie choice hooks and inspirational lyrics to rescue the song from its doldrums. "Everybody's Changing," the "Untitled 1," which glides along "Everybody's Changing," the closest Keane comes to truly rock- on a synthesizer line straight out of

CAROLINA Franklin St. 933-8464

SUPERSIZE ME

MATINEES DAILY 2:15, 4:30, 7:00, 9:1

THE NEW YORK TIMES RAVES! CRITICS' PICK - A STRONG, TAUT WARTIME Di Andre Téchiné is the master of the quick, light stru Immanuale Béart is quietly magnetic."

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MATINEES DAILY 2:10, 4:20, 7:10, 9:

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ing out, boasts a piano riff that

place on *Hopes and Fears*, but turns out to be the most compelling track on it simply because it dares to break the mold. Also, Chaplin's vocals do possess a resonant quality capable of res-cuing the lesser material. Ardent

latch onto this wholesale.

can get past the band's derivative nature and the glaring lack of spon-taneity, you'll be left with a perfect-ly enjoyable listening experience. Some of this music is even kind

of pretty. Sort of like that song, "The Scientist," by that band, the one with the nimble lead singer a real pre

'Hopes' keen on Coldplay sound an Air record, at first sounds out of

followers of Top 40 radio will be familiar with Keane's strategy and

Whether the more conscientious listener will find anything worth savoring here is debatable: if you can get past the band's derivative

chances are you'll like this band, too. But that's not what makes Keane so mediocre.

· Hopes and Fears is an inoffensive but inconsequential collection of pop songs that are as emotionally vapid as they are catchy. Everything about Keane is cal-

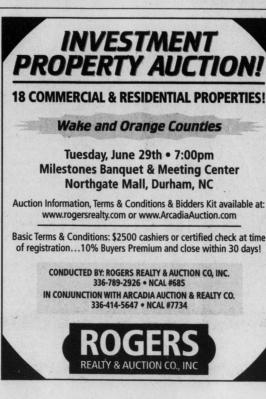
culated, from the self-consciously labored music to the band photos,

STARSYSTEM * POOR ** FAIR *** GOOD **** EXCELLENT ***** CLASSIC



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