

Docuopic shatters myths, shows twin sides of war

Offers all-access view of Arab TV

BY MICHAEL PUCCI
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

"We want to show that war has a human cost," Al Jazeera senior producer Samir Khader says early in "Control Room," defending his network's decision to air images of war-ravaged bodies.

Meanwhile, halfway across the world, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld claims the news channel does nothing more than spew anti-American propaganda.

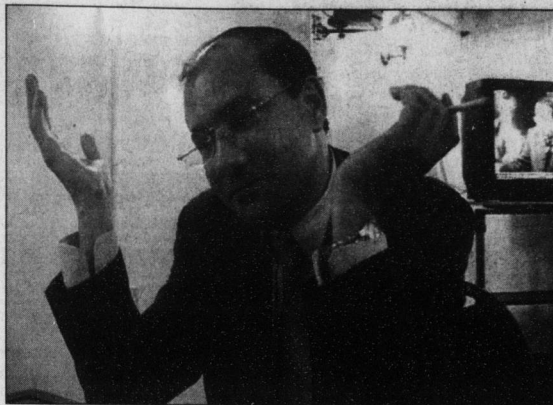
In this fascinating new documentary, director Jehane Noujaim was given nearly unfettered access to the inner workings of the Al Jazeera network, which reaches 40 million Arab viewers, as it covered the United States' war with Iraq.

Noujaim wisely elects to sit back and let the principles involved go about their business, but three voices carry the film.

Khader comes off as a truly articulate, thoughtful producer whose intentions for his station contradict what Rumsfeld accuses it of ruthlessly promoting.

Lt. John Rushing, a well-meaning, camera-friendly U.S. Army press officer, initially acts as the military's mouthpiece, dutifully offering glib rationales that echo Rumsfeld's almost verbatim.

And Arab journalist Hassan Ibrahim offers blunt and darkly humorous insights into what U.S. policy has become ("Democratize or we'll shoot you").



Samir Khader, a producer for Al Jazeera, can only throw his hands up in despair after discussing the merits of Fox News in "Control Room."

MOVIE REVIEW "CONTROL ROOM" ★★★★

"Control Room" succeeds in eliciting feelings of genuine skepticism toward the U.S. media's war coverage (though Khader bemusedly mentions that if Fox News offered him a job, he'd take it), as well as the military's self-promoting discretion in releasing information.

Consider how readily a military spokesman offers fine points regarding newly rescued war hero Jessica Lynch, but clams up when talk moves to the emerging news of the day — the United States' siege of Baghdad.

Most notably, it sufficiently dispels the perceptions of Al Jazeera

as an Iraqi publicity machine. Why, for example, did Al Jazeera receive relentless criticism for airing footage of American casualties when the U.S. media, in the name of fair and balanced coverage, did precisely the same thing with Iraqi victims?

A turning point comes when Rushing acknowledges that the images he has seen of Iraqi casualties haven't repulsed him nearly as much as the American ones.

From that moment on, there is a noticeable shift in how he conducts his interviews, as he has come to doubt the merits of his once reflexive and rehearsed responses.

By film's end, so have we.

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

Williams aims high, achieves low

BY MICHAEL PUCCI
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

What is the appeal of the one-man band?

Ever since The Beatles dropped Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band on an unsuspecting public in 1967, the LP became an art form unto itself.

And, as the most creative period in rock's still-brief history saw musicians realize what an Album could be, perhaps it was only too logical that artists recorded LPs wherein they played all of the music themselves.

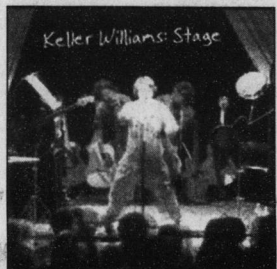
Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Todd Rundgren and Prince all achieved great success indulging in this emerging pastime.

But at least when they performed live, they had a touring band. Keller Williams has seen their hands and raised the stakes, at least in a live setting. He truly is a solo performer in all senses of the word, creating a full band's worth of sound all by his lonesome.

If you aren't familiar with the Fredericksburg, Va., native's schtick, he utilizes a technique called phrase sampling: Williams will sing or play a phrase, step on a footswitch which leads directly to a soundboard, and is then able to play something else on top of what he just played — it's the ultimate use of overdubbing.

Little surprise, then, that Williams has chosen to release Stage, an engaging collection of his onstage travails.

Unfortunately, Williams, who is



MUSIC REVIEW KELLER WILLIAMS STAGE ★★★

dubiously signed to String Cheese Incident's personal label, doesn't have the tunes to back up his wildly ambitious live show.

Many of the songs on Stage suffer from sounding like meandering excursions into jam-band territory. He frequently repeats himself and will test even the most patient listener.

That repetitiveness probably isn't a factor if you witness him in person. Watching Williams treat the stage like his personal laboratory, experimenting with instruments ranging from acoustic guitars to

theramins, is undoubtedly a riot. But if you're listening to it from the comfort of your own home, it doesn't much matter whether the sounds coming from your speakers are produced by one man or 15.

The novelty wears off, and ultimately, so does Stage's charm, unable to separate itself from the morass of material from other jam bands.

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

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Vocals lead to Chronic pain

BY BECCA MOORE
STAFF WRITER

Chronic Future is suffering from an identity crisis. At various points during its album, *Lines in My Face*, the style and vocals are reminiscent of Jimmy Eat World, Papa Roach, Eminem, 2 Skinnee J's and Linkin Park.

That said, the majority of the album is a weird mesh of low-key soft rock, rap vocals and decent agro-rock choruses.

On "World Keeps Spinning," lead singer Mike Busse's voice sounds like he's trying to pull off a weird parody of Eminem, except the rhythm of the rap doesn't align with the hollow beat. The chorus, however, sounds more akin to a rock 'n' roll tune and is infectiously catchy.

"Shellshocked" mixes sing-along emo-friendly vocals and soft guitar, juxtaposed (again!) with a catchy and legitimately rockin' chorus.

They're also fond of throwing in, among the heavy guitar, annoying little syncopated beats that make one think a cell phone is ringing.

"New York, NY," features absolutely agitating rapping and a rhythmic chorus added with clumsy bass drums.

The juxtaposition of the rap and the rock styles isn't necessarily a bad (or original) idea, but on this album the band uses it formu-

MUSIC REVIEW

CHRONIC FUTURE
CHRONIC FUTURE
★★★

laically.

It's as if Chronic Future decided that if they just mastered the choruses of songs, they'd be able to fill in the rest later and it'd sound fine.

Either that or they used up the only rock riffs they know and figured they'd just rap the rest of the album and no one would really notice.

Busse's voice is enjoyable on portions of tracks, but it often just trails off into a rhythmless rant or whiny scream.

To their credit, the intro to "Memories in f Minor" sounds a lot like the (now-defunct) Skinnee J's, with a melodic backbeat, complete with vocals that are bouncy and match up to the music.

This could have been a strong foundation for an entire track that sounded good, but alas, Busse starts up again with the whiny screaming, and we're back to square one.

However, the boys of Chronic Future understand that their style might not go down easy with the masses.

On "Apology for Non-



Symmetry," Busse raps, "I must apologize for not participating in symmetry/ But it's been such a struggle to win entry to this industry."

The rest of the song details working out a relationship and taking life head-on, and is almost inspiring.

The musical aspect of the track actually flows well, with uncharacteristically consistent guitars and thrashing drums.

If it takes the time to tweak the vocals and smooth out the transitions in its songwriting style, Chronic Future could be a modern-rock playlist force to be reckoned with.

So please, Busse, take voice lessons or let someone else do the frontin'.

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

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