

DIVERRECOMMENDS

■ "The Emperor's New Groove" — The hilarious tale of a pre-tentious emperor-turned-llama, Kuzco, (voiced by David Spade), this animated Disney flick isn't just for kids.

The film is complete with ridiculous characters, including the emperor's decrepit and conniving advisor, Yzma, who is "scary beyond all reason," and her young assistant, Kronk, who seems to be a combination of Fabio and Martha Stewart — but don't insult his spinach puffs.

Between Spade's llama impersonations and John Goodman as a humble and kind-hearted peasant, this film is as endearing as it is side-splitting.

■ Cheesy power ballads of the '80s — Whether you are suffering from a rough breakup or are head over heels in love, you can't go wrong with these timeless classics.

Hits like "I Want to Know What Love Is" by Foreigner and Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" tell of people hoping for luck in the crazy game of love. They are infused with enough passion, melodrama and flat-out cheese to turn any skeptic into a full-fledged romantic.

As the synthesized music gets louder and the singers wail about love, you can truly feel the emotional intensity. If you're looking for an ode to sing to your sweetheart, try "When I See You Smile" by Bad English.

Whether you find these tunes touching or way too theatrical, there is room for laughter and enjoyment in these electrifying hits.

■ "The Secret Life of Bees," Sue Monk Kidd — This heart-warming novel tells the story of Lily Owen, a child growing up in the 1960s. At the age of 14, she escapes the house of her oppressive and abusive father with her nanny, Rosaleen. She and Rosaleen find a place to stay with three female beekeepers, and their new life begins.

Lily, a young white girl, finds the family she never had in the home of these three black sisters, named May, June and August. The novel highlights racial relations and conflict as it tells of Lily's interaction with these loving and crazy old women.

But don't be deterred if it sounds too heavy. The novel balances its drama with comedy as the kooky women teach Lily the art of keeping bees, making this book sweet as honey.

Contact Leah Konen at konen@email.unc.edu.

Eclectic collective enlivens crowd

WXYC celebration boasts varied acts

BY JACKY BRAMMER
STAFF WRITER

Behind some vintage Groucho Marx shades, Billy Sugarfix took the stage as host to kick off WXYC's 10th anniversary show Saturday night at the Local 506.

The University's student-run radio station organized the talents of local acts eNtet, The Moaners, Spectac and Jett Rink to commemorate its 10 years of Internet radio broadcasting.

While Sugarfix's disguise motif was mildly amusing at first, it soon became tired as he took on personas ranging from Santa Claus to one of his surviving relatives from the Hatfield-McCoy rivalry.

But his amateur-hour attempts

at comedy were few, and the music soon took center stage.

eNtet was the first band of the evening, and with the appearance of a saxophone and stirring sounds of melodious runs, hopes were high.

But for those looking for classic jazz, things soon went downhill.

The band quickly dove headfirst into clunky free jazz. Now, good free jazz still has significant drawbacks because of the genre, but this music would numb Ornette Coleman — kind of like elevator music in slow motion.

In the middle of these barrages of incessant noise, minor players received solos, perhaps as a payoff to guarantee future membership in the band.

To be fair, if someone really listened for a message beneath the obtrusive exterior, he could find one. But you could do the same thing looking at television static for 20 minutes or listening to the rhythm of a washing machine's dry cycles.

The crowd and the mood picked up when the second band, The Moaners, took the stage. With only two female members, one could feel the approach of overly feminized teen-angst punk rock.

Once they started playing, though, all preconceptions were set aside. The dance-inducing drum cadence nicely complemented the guitarist's wailing riffs.

When the group combined those sounds with a moaning harmonica, it managed to create dreamy rock with a crisp, bluesy edge.

And in a particularly impressive

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WXYC INTERNET BENEFIT LOCAL 506 SATURDAY, NOV. 6

★★★★

move, drummer Laura King donned an axe and proceeded to play both her instruments at the same time.

Spectac, the night's third act, took up the mic and dealt lyrical flows that spelled out all his loves and unseemly woes. With a trendy sound bite from "Kill Bill: Vol. 2," the performance was off and rolling.

Sporting solid production from DJ Bumrush and mad beats compliments of Durham's own 9th Wonder, Spectac tore the house down with a wide-ranging freestyle. While perhaps relying too much on hooks and brief samples, Spectac still managed

to resemble a young Ghostface and was the best act of the lineup.

Jett Rink was the final band of the night and, after the high of Spectac, was somewhat of a letdown. The band feels like it wants to be punk, and its supporting members are good enough, but the lead vocals feel out of place with the rest of the band's tone.

Overall, WXYC put on a mixed show. eNtet and Jett Rink gave commendable efforts but fell short of the mark. But The Moaners, and especially Spectac, managed to save the show and the crowd.

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

Ebullient Ditty Bops try hand at twee pop tunes

BY TOM PREVITE
STAFF WRITER

In the jaded and cynical world in which you've wrapped yourself, The Ditty Bops want to be your ray of hope.

The Ditty Bops' saccharine-sweet self-titled debut album isn't for those who like their music without some sugar. Those people will die from an overdose, because the band's music is the equivalent of a syrupy syringe to the heart.

But for those of you willing to open up and let a little sunshine in, you could find yourself warming up quickly to the upbeat female duo.

Like overgrown children, Abby Dewald and Amanda Barrett trot through their twee pop album with nary a care.

The opening "Walk or Ride" is a toe-tapping tune that tells of the good, simple things in life: "With just one kiss you could change the world/It might not be much better but it certainly couldn't hurt."

The surprising degree of innocence portrayed by both the band's lyrics and sonic qualities makes one wonder how the group

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THE DITTY BOPS THE DITTY BOPS

★★★★

could avoid being discarded as an irrelevant novelty act, a duo best suited to create children's albums.

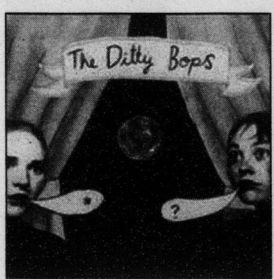
The music itself is a fairly bubbly collection of songs featuring an eclectic yet complementary mix of jazz, pop and country.

If you were simply listening to the album's harmless melodies, you'd have a hard time deciding what exactly The Ditty Bops wanted to be.

But it's the strength of their vocals that defines who The Ditty Bops are and why a major label such as Warner Brothers would want to sign them. This duo is one in a million.

The pair harmonizes beautifully, drawing from a Simon and Garfunkel-like musical instinct. Their voices weave together with grace, creating an intoxicating, enticing aural effect that's hard to resist.

This harmonic pattern continues throughout the album, setting its pace and dominating the



moor.

Granted, the overly cheerful theme of *The Ditty Bops* will likely hide the group from a mainstream market saturated with nu-punk, pop-rock and rap.

A group with this obvious degree of high-caliber vocal talent begs for a second album, something with a greater sense of maturity that can draw a larger audience.

Judging from the album cover's childish art, though, that might be a stretch.

For now, The Ditty Bops are happy to be the spokeswomen for the creation of a new genre: children's albums for adults.

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

Dead Texan evokes warmth in distance

BY ROBBIE MACKEY
STAFF WRITER

Today was sunny, but the air was a crisp 50 degrees. Short sleeve shirts hid at home in dresser drawers. Flip flops turned into shoes and scarves hugged necks.

Even so, it wasn't too cold. There were scant shaded moments of shivering spines, but in the bright sun, the temperature was almost irrelevant.

Autumn was finally here. Like fall, *The Dead Texan's* self-titled debut is a give-and-take, a neck and neck battle between warm and cold.

Of course, neither wins out—the album manages to dance serenely and satisfyingly in and out of sunlight and shade—but the tacit scuffle is utterly gratifying.

The crypto-bionically dubbed "The Six Million Dollar Sandwich" opens the record with coming-dawn string swells and sunny determination, its warmth setting the table for the rest of the album's hopeful numbers.

But the distant acoustic strums and reverb-soaked piano chords of "A Chronicle of Early Failures — Part 1" paint a much more darkly acquiescent picture. Indeed, the bulk of *The Dead*

MUSICREVIEW

THE DEAD TEXAN THE DEAD TEXAN

★★★★

Texan situates the two approaches against one another, at times forcing them to reconcile, like in part two of "Chronicle."

The swelling track's teary-eyed grandeur is overt, evoking a moment reminiscent of the overwhelming courage from some big-budget adventure film, but the emotional impact is undeniable.

Like a more meditative Björk, or a less immediate Cocteau Twins, *The Dead Texan* borrows heavily from Brian Eno's cannon of ambient work.

"La Ballade d'Alain Georges" and "When I See Scissors I Can't Help But Think of You" work much like the more ambient fare of Eno's *Another Green World*, only more cinematic and extravagant.

Tailor-made for falling leaves and windy days, *The Dead Texan* have crafted a delightfully adroit and autumnal debut.

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Inconsistency slays label showcase

BEN PITTARD
STAFF WRITER

I wish the milkman would deliver more milk — in the morning. Avant indie-poppers Deerhoof came to Local 506 on Sunday in support of their latest LP, *Milkman*, on Kill Rock Stars' experimental

imprint label, 5 Rue Christine.

Inside the crowded, smoke-congested room that is Local 506, opener All Astronauts blared and wailed with the fury of a scorned siren belching from her island precipice. Decker out in an olive green dress, frontwoman Haydee Thompson pleased her fans with a genuine smile on her face as she performed through the set.

At one point, she adorned her head with a large costume flower and wore a leaf glove that looked oddly like a green lobster claw, attempting to hold the microphone to continue her performance. With a passion and flair befitting someone dressed as a flower, she continued, falling from the stage into the arms of an unsuspecting audience.

Unfortunately, the night fizzled out before it really began. Following All Astronauts was Dark Inside the Sun, a decidedly more subdued group consisting of only two people playing together on stage.

Although the duo has an intimate and altogether beautiful sound, it couldn't help but seem somewhat

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KILL ROCK STARS BANDS LOCAL 506 SUNDAY, NOV. 7

★★★

out of place at this particular show.

Its soft, whispering instrumentation fell beneath the idle conversations at the bar. The chatter of the audience could be heard well over the pair's tunes as they sojourned on, finishing a set to which it appeared few were actually listening.

And the headliners were remarkably underwhelming. Given the preconceived notion that a magical land of enchantment would appear onstage, it was somewhat disappointing to see four normally dressed indie musicians.

Things began with a simple entrance and a hello before the group headed right into its first track, pounding away.

The sound quality matched that of the band's albums, and the group played everything one could possibly want to hear from its canon with surgical precision. But the thing is, Deerhoof never failed to please, yet never actually impressed.

The band churned out its bizarre brand of indie pop as though playing the soundtrack to an elementary school playground in the depths of an acid binge. Frontwoman Satomi Matsuzaki squeaked out her adorably high-pitched vocals with perfect delivery as the band pummeled its instruments behind her with a comical fury.

The show ended as it began — abruptly. At the end of "Panda, Panda, Panda," Matsuzaki piped a sharp "bye bye," and the band left the stage.

As the night drew to a close I was left with one thought: I wish the milkman would deliver more milk ... 'cause I'm yawning.

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

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