

THE QUICK AND DIRTY

speed reads for your entertainment needs

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dive recommends

['SPORTS NIGHT']

Before TV producer Aaron Sorkin showed his political stripes in "The West Wing," he donned pinstripes.

With this short-lived ABC comedy-drama, Sorkin delved into the world of a primetime Sportscenter-esque show.

With stars Peter Krause, Felicity Huffman and a strong supporting cast, Sorkin delivered a smart, fast-paced series with punchlines that stuck and clever storylines that went beyond the box scores.

[iDIG1T]

The quest for the ultimate music site has come to an end. The music on this site flows like water.

Built with a searchable catalogue that would rival Amazon.com, iDIG1T.com allows Internet users to listen to just about any album they want through Windows Media Player, using effective streaming technology.

Updated regularly, iDIG1T allows music fans to listen to artists ranging from Kanye West to Frank Sinatra to Buju Banton.

Yes — it's that thorough and eclectic.

Contact Harry Kaplowitz at hk@unc.edu.

Oranger album lends sour sound

BY BETH MECHEM
STAFF WRITER

When a band changes its sound, it's usually a call for fans to get nervous.

With the latest release from Oranger, *New Comes and Goes*, fans all over should be biting their nails.

The band's sound has always been overrun with psychedelic pop tones, but in its fourth full-length album, the guys seem to have bought into the slower indie scene.

Instead of upbeat and cheerful melodies, listeners are bombarded with tales of failed relationships and loneliness.

Still, there are shades of the old sound to entice listeners.

"Target You by Feel," "Light Machine," and "Garden Party for the Murder Pride" are good

MUSICREVIEW

ORANGER
NEW COMES AND GOES

★★★

enough to make listening to the album worthwhile.

Other songs are sometimes painful, but at least most of them are two- or three-minute quips that don't leave you begging for more.

The general theme of the album is how girls break guys' hearts and leave them sad and alone.

It's a good album for bemoaning the loss of a significant other, but who does that after high school?

Instead of trying to advance as artists, the members of Oranger are trying to ride the indie wave into a successful LP.

But with all the indie bands popping out from the woodwork, Oranger needs to try harder to stand out.

The band's lack of creativity is evident in its use of gimmicks. Groups resort to these to distract listeners from the actual music.

Oranger decided to go with odd names and alternate spellings for some of its songs.

While these unusual spellings make for a fun back-album cover, they don't help the band.

"Whacha Holden," "Haeter," and "Outtatoch" do nothing to bolster the album's bland lyrics.

Such alternate spellings are reminiscent of some Usher songs including "U Remind Me" and "U R the One."

Oranger and Usher both seem to be advocates of sounding things out instead of using proper grammar.

Casual music listeners should be wary of *New Comes and Goes*. Most of these songs aren't radio friendly and aren't for easy listening.

Avid music listeners might have the patience to sift through the rubbish and find the good.

Oranger should not be judged by its latest album, which hopefully is just a minor blip in the group's otherwise impressive career.

The LP might not have received such a harsh review if Oranger's potential wasn't already known.

After the amazing disc, *The Quiet Vibration Land*, Oranger's expectations were set high.

This is just a dry effort from an otherwise juicy band.

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

Neil Young sure to impress longtime fans on latest LP

BY ALAN HAYES
STAFF WRITER

In the week between being diagnosed with a brain aneurysm and undergoing its surgical removal, Neil Young flew to Nashville, Tenn., where he wrote and recorded the 31st album of his career, *Prairie Wind*.

That fact alone would make Young a rare breed among rock stars.

It is difficult to imagine John Mayer or any of the other also-rans cluttering today's rock 'n' roll scene as being able to undertake a project like this under similar circumstances.

Add to that fact that Young was an active recording artist as far back as 1967 and was one of the movers in the Seattle grunge craze.

That, combined with the fact that his latest album is quite good, makes it hard to deny that Neil Young arguably can be described, along with the Rolling Stones and perhaps a few others, as one of the elder statesmen of rock 'n' roll.

It's true that, throughout the years, Young has made a fair amount of music that sounds a lot like the tracks on *Prairie Wind*, but it's also true that no one else has.

The album is most similar in its style to Young's 1972 release *Harvest*, and its pseudo-sequel *Harvest Moon*, released in 1992.

Prairie Wind, though it is unfortunately the weakest of the three, completes what has turned out to be a sort of acoustic rock trilogy.

Young's acoustic albums are a far cry from the distorted electric sound of classics such as "Hey Hey, My My" and "Down by the River," but they're distinctive, classic Neil Young nevertheless.

The first single off the latest album — and its best track — is "The Painter." The song is a typical ballad from this Canadian cowboy and pulls together many of the album's

MUSICREVIEW

NEIL YOUNG
PRAIRIE WIND

★★★★

themes: remembrances of places, friends and feelings.

It's not surprising that Young chose to sing about memories of such things as his Canadian boyhood home and his father on this album given the circumstances under which it was written and recorded.

Even since *Harvest*, Young has had a fondness for reminiscence, and the trait is only more noticeable in his first release since his illness.

Aside from "The Painter," the tracks range from average to good.

The one track that might not ring true for longtime Neil Young fans is "No Wonder," a song featuring what seems to be the requisite left-wing commentary about Sept. 11 and fat-cat politicians.

Young has been known as a political activist for much of his career, but even so it's somewhat jarring that one of his songs references Chris Rock and his political views.

It's just weird — like if Kanye West were to name-drop Gallagher on his next album.

The album as a whole has a very "Nashville" sound: lots of steel guitar and heavy use of backup vocals that are equal parts church choir and doo-wop, though they occasionally overpower what it is they're backing up.

Overall, fans of Young's earlier acoustic work won't regret giving *Prairie Wind* a listen.

It features one of the most unique musical voices of the past 40 years doing what he does best with a level of emotion not often found on new releases.

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

Adaptation fails to fill acclaimed book's shoes

BY HARRY KAPLOWITZ
STAFF WRITER

Don't worry, Hollywood is going to get it right one of these days.

Sometime between Woody Allen getting an Oscar and Will Smith giving up on his rap career, the studios will finally learn how to adapt books to the big screen perfectly.

Until then, audiences will be left with films such as Curtis Hanson's "In Her Shoes," a romantic dramedy with heavy doses of family dysfunction and schmaltz.

Playing off Jennifer Weiner's best-selling novel, the movie becomes exactly what it intended to be: a chick flick sans a saccharine-sweet center.

It's the story of Rose (Toni Collette), an unflinchingly logical lawyer whose life is spiraled into a new direction when her fun-loving sister, Maggie (Cameron Diaz), moves in with her.

But, no — perhaps the film is about Maggie, the beautiful and free-spirited sister whose life has been set awry since she dropped out of college.

But, see, that's not quite right, either.

The movie also could be about Ella (Shirley MacLaine), Maggie and Rose's long-lost grandmother who Maggie tracks down after she is kicked out of Rose's apartment.

That is the dilemma "In Her Shoes" fails to resolve in the span of its drawn-out, 130-minute frame.

"Who do you like more?" screenwriter Susannah Grant seems to be asking the audience as the story pans from Rose dating Übermensch Simon Stein (Mark Feuerstein), to Maggie

MOVIE REVIEW

'IN HER SHOES'

★★★

buying outfits for senior citizens to Ella trying to legitimize her relationship with her estranged granddaughters.

Coming off a much more successful run with "Erin Brockovich" in 2000, Grant is given the burdensome task of adapting a film that focuses on three main characters and their predicaments while trying to give each plot the attention it needs to develop by itself on screen.

The result is a movie that spends too much time trying to figure out what it wants to be and not enough time exploring the story's more interesting humanistic elements.

Hanson, who's tackled tougher projects with "L.A. Confidential" and "8 Mile," never seems to figure out where he wants to go with this film.

Part family drama, part romantic comedy and part showcasing of Diaz's nonemotive assets, the movie dribbles along from plotline to plotline with only a small idea of direction.

The production team did an admirable job, however.

The story is hard to adapt, and Weiner's story does a lot of jumping around.

But the literary transitions appear scattered and frustrating on screen.

Collette, though not given top billing, definitely carries the film and plays the role she's been playing on and off since "Muriel's Wedding."

She's not a floozy like Maggie, but she's no old maid either.

Collette has made a career out of playing the average woman, and it's never been more enjoyable.

Diaz, despite top billing and a role fit for her, seemed to fall dramatically short.

Her body, on the other hand, delivered Oscar-worthy performances.

It doesn't avoid the pratfalls most adaptations encounter, but "In Her Shoes" still is smart, sexy and not just your average chick flick.

Hollywood might struggle to figure out how to make the perfect adaptation, but movies like this almost hit the mark.

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

Question of minds hits hard in 'Proof'

MOVIE REVIEW

'PROOF'

★★★

BY BETH DOZIER
STAFF WRITER

Take a look in the mirror. You may have your dad's eyes, your mom's smile or perhaps your Aunt Mildred's unfortunate nose.

But what about below the surface? What about the inheritance you can't see?

In John Madden's "Proof," Catherine (Gwyneth Paltrow), the daughter of a recently deceased and delusional mathematician, wonders whether her apparent talent for math means that she has also inherited her father's insanity.

Madden's adaptation of David Auburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning play blurs the line between past and present and reality and imagination to create a mathematical thriller of sorts.

Paltrow convincingly balances Catherine's frigid insecurity with an understated confidence as she comes to terms with her father's death and the years she lost caring for him, while simultaneously questioning her own sanity.

Catherine's father, Robert (Anthony Hopkins), apparently revolutionized mathematics in his early twenties before he fell ill, prompting Catherine to abandon her own mathematical studies at Northwestern University to care for him.

After the father's death, his former student Hal (Jake Gyllenhaal) arrives to sift through the hundreds of notebooks that he left, hoping to find another mathematical discovery inside Robert's tortured mind.

Catherine then has to struggle with her attraction to Hal and her overriding fear that he just wants to exploit her father's work.

To complicate the mix, Catherine's estranged sister Claire (Hope Davis) tries to care for her, but her motherly ways alienate Catherine, who resents her sister for not helping to care for their father.

When Catherine shows Hal a notebook that contains a proof that would revolutionize the field, the question arises: Did Robert write it or did Catherine? And thus a mathematical whodunit ensues.

Gyllenhaal does OK by his subtle portrayal of Hal, but it is Davis' and Paltrow's performances that make the film believable.

Davis easily could have made Claire a one-dimensional, detestable character, but she reveals that beneath Claire's Martha Stewart-like facade, she does care about her sister and is perhaps jealous of her closeness toward their father.

Paltrow gives Catherine a sort of raw anguish in her no-frills performance, full of not-so-flattering close-ups.

"Proof" applies to Catherine's three different struggles.

First, there's the explicit proof and the quest to discover who wrote it, then there is Catherine's need for proof that Hal's love for her is real, and finally whether or not Catherine's mathematical genius is proof that she shares her father's insanity.

But don't expect a Pythagorean theorem to solve this triangle. The film suggests that in life, and sometimes in math, there are no easy answers.

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

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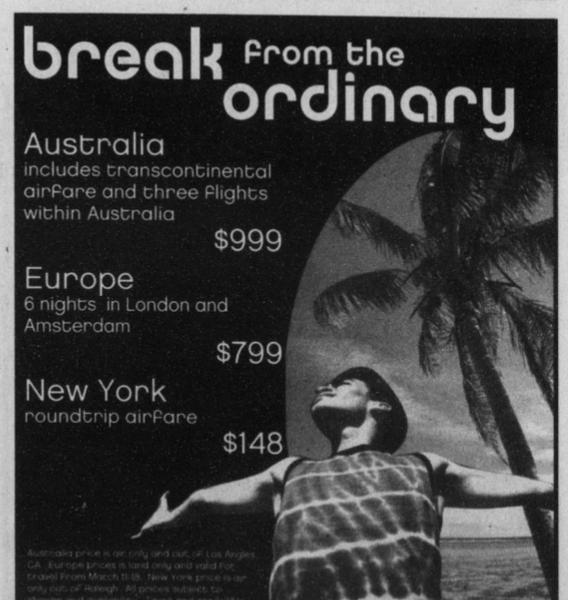
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