

# Diversions

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DIVE ONLINE

■ ANOTHER LIVE RECORDING? ... Yonder Mountain String Band looks to bank some bucks ■ A WORLD OF TROUBLE ... Kate Beckinsale offers more of the same in 'Underworld' sequel

## tuning IN TO THE O.C.

FOX'S OTHER HIT TV SHOW IS  
REDEFINING MUSIC TRENDS

**BY  
ORR  
SHTUHL**  
STAFF WRITER

**F**our attractive teens hover by the stage in a dingy yet fashionable club. Backing their gossipy chatter is a crowd of impeccably dressed models, lush, sexy lighting and — Modest Mouse?

Or maybe it's the Walkmen, or Death Cab for Cutie.

That's the way they live on "The O.C.": hip, wealthy and with an impossible knack for underground music. And they're starting to affect consumers.

Now in its third season, the show's tendency to feature indie music has plucked many bands from relative obscurity. Frontrunners include Jem, Imogen Heap and Rooney, whose album sales tripled following an on-air performance.

But in a world where entertainment is as much a business as it is

an art, injecting indie music into the mainstream raises questions about who's making the decisions and where their interests lie.

Alexandra Patsavas, the savvy young music supervisor of "The O.C.," is in the trenches. Swamped by hundreds of CDs every week, it's her job to wade through submissions from as far as France or Sweden and select the handful (five or so) that will make it onto an episode.

It's a difficult process, and with the show's booming popularity and influence, her responsibility has heightened even more.

But some fans and musicians alike worry about the effects of commercialization on a movement that has thrived on its hardworking underground. Purists might even jump to disown bands once they become mainstream.

"I was that snobby indie-rock girl, so I understand (that) impulse," Patsavas said.

There is a notion that bands are built on the road, in tour vans and tiny clubs, perfecting their craft for years before striking commercial gold.

Call it Darwinian, call it the American dream, but it seems right that hard work is what pays off.

Add to that the show's image: A dramatized world in which snotty 25-year-old teens vie for love in a world filled with yachts and cocktail parties. Not every band wants to be associated with that, and as famous ad campaigns have shown, visual imagery can permanently graft itself onto a song.

How many people can separate The Who's "Who Are You?" from "CSI" on CBS, or Phantom Planet's "California" from the show that launched it?

Clap Your Hands Say Yeah is one band that seems to have those concerns. Reportedly, the band declined an offer to be played on "The O.C." and still managed to sell more than 50,000 copies of its self-titled debut — all without a record deal.

Yet Patsavas insists that the show's powers are being used for good, not evil.

A longtime music fan, she started music supervising for B-level horror movies in 1995 and was booking and promoting bands as early as her college years.

"The producers and I really strive to do the music the best we can on the show," Patsavas said. "Why use manufactured music when there's so much good music out there?"

But even those who believe in TV's good intentions recognize its effect on the independent scene.

The term "indie" used to refer to bands not on a major label, but it has since become a buzz word describing a number of musical styles uncommon to the mainstream — for now.

"There's a spirit behind independent

music," said Death Cab for Cutie drummer Jason McGerr, who was in Raleigh for an October show at Disco Rodeo. "People put a little more thought into the music sometimes, especially lyrically."

Death Cab for Cutie is the poster child of indie rock. *Transatlanticism*, the band's fourth major release on indie label Barsuk Records, pushed them into the spotlight, but their move to Atlantic Records and subsequent appearance on "The O.C." garnered an explosion of press coverage.

"(The attention) doesn't bother me, but it's sort of proven the fact that media sells more records than radio these days," McGerr said.

"When kids are at home watching their favorite program once a week, they're associating with actors and actresses and people that portray whatever it is they're going through.

SEE O.C. MUSIC,  
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Death Cab for Cutie

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.DEATHCABFORCUTIE.COM



The cast of 'The O.C.'

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.FOX.COM/OC



Phantom Planet

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.PHANTOMPLANET.COM