

Theater hosts young actors

'Oliver!' sells out all three shows

BY CHRISTINA STRAUCH
STAFF WRITER

While Chapel Hill is no New York City, UNC's Paul Green Theatre became a Broadway playhouse for a group of 43 regional youngsters this past weekend who put on three sold-out performances of the musical "Oliver!"

The ArtsCenter of Carrboro and PlayMakers Repertory Company created a unique summer program which allowed these kids to rehearse and perform in a professional theater setting.

"The director's aim was to treat the kids as professionals," said Elizabeth Phillips, a UNC sophomore who was in attendance opening night.

"('Oliver!') had a really good energy because it's kids performing," she said.

As a dramatic art major, Phillips is no stranger to the theater space and the productions that PlayMakers puts on during the school year.

And she was duly impressed by the kids' showmanship.

"It's a whole different type of acting and musical theater to play to three sides," she said of the thrust style stage at the Paul Green Theatre.

"It's not like going to see a school play."

Her friend, sophomore English major William Hackney, agreed.

"My co-worker is involved with the show so I came to see it because she was so involved; I had no idea it was kids," he said.

"It gives the space a good family vibe."

Lisa Gramann, the mother of 15-year-old ensemble member Beth Gramann, was one of the many parents in the house.

"It has been a phenomenal experience for my daughter," she said. "She couldn't wait to come back to the theater everyday."

Lisa Gramann's mother, Paula Slagle, traveled all the way from Chesapeake, Va. to see her granddaughter perform.

"This is one of the children's most special moments," Slagle said.

"It's a gift from the Conservatory and PlayMakers to offer this opportunity."

And seeing the youngsters perform was another gift in itself.

"The best part is just watching the kids really enjoy themselves," Gramann said.

Matthew Baldiga, a University senior who played Fagin, witnessed the kids' excitement firsthand.

"The kids all had a blast, and that's what it's all about," he said.

But Baldiga's involvement did not go unnoticed.

"Matt is pretty spectacular," Phillips said of the only actor older than 18 to participate in the show.

But the wonder was not limited to what was happening on stage.

"The band did a great job of filling out the sound with very few instruments," Hackney said.

The adult orchestra was comprised of a pianist, a violinist, a flautist and a percussionist.

"Backstage after the show, everyone was so excited," said 16-year-old actor Alexander Daly, a senior who attends Durham Academy.

"The best part was seeing all of these really young kids progressing as actors and taking on so much responsibility."

Audiences will get a second chance to see director Tom Quaintance's work with another family-oriented show in PlayMakers' production of "The Little Prince," which will open this winter.

"It's a fulfilling thing to tell a story to people and really affect them," Daly said.

And believe it or not, Daly started out only playing sports in high school.

"I would encourage anyone who has even the smallest urge to act to try it."

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

Spoon feeds tasty indie pop

BY HARRY KAPLOWITZ
SENIOR WRITER

Fans of the Austin band Spoon could make an argument for dividing the career of Britt Daniel and his indie rock outfit into two distinct periods.

First comes the time prior to their signing with Durham-based Merge Records, which gave way to two respectable albums and a triumvirate of good EPs.

Then there are the four years that followed, which saw the band release three acclaimed and (relatively) popular LPs: 2001's *Girls Can Tell*, 2002's *Kill the Moonlight* and 2005's *Gimme Fiction*.

With that consistent acclaim and a growing fan base came a great amount of buzz surrounding the release of their fourth Merge record, the oddly titled *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*.

It's actually named for the fragmented and circular wind melody heard on the album's second track, "The Ghost of You Lingers" — it'll make sense when you hear it.

And as far as the band's Merge years are concerned, *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga* is Spoon's best album since *Girls Can Tell*.

In some ways, it's even better.

Its opening track ("Don't Make Me a Target") is a more mature, alluring introduction to the album than *Girls Can Tell*'s "Everything

Hits at Once," and *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga* boasts a cheery consistency while *Girls Can Tell* felt more disjointed than cohesive in sound.

That being said, what Spoon album hasn't been compared to *Girls Can Tell*? It set the framework for their future albums, and Spoon has stuck to that same musical formula ever since. And that's left Daniel with little to improve upon since *Girls Can Tell* was a phenomenal album that showcased a mastery of indie rock craftsmanship and pop sensibilities.

So, by that account, it seems that Daniel and company are merely competing with themselves on *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*, essentially asking each other, "Can we do better this time around? Is there even room for a new take on what we already know works well?"

The answer to both of those questions is a resounding "yes."

Daniel, with his unmistakable voice, succeeds rather brilliantly in his efforts to make an album that is both outstanding on a technical scale and catchy as all get-out.

It's a rare thing to find an album that's able to meet both the hipster's definition of what indie rock should be and the mainstream's expectations of what pop/rock is supposed to sound like.

Immediate examples that come to mind are Saturday Looks Good To Me's *Every Night*, The Shins' *Chutes Too Narrow* or anything by The New Pornographers.

Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga most certainly is one of those types of albums, and, if you had to pick just one, it's probably the only Spoon release that fits the bill. It's focused, spirited and, perhaps most importantly, imbued with a sense of history.

It somehow manages to experiment with new sounds while also sounding like every other Spoon LP that's preceded it, particularly *Kill the Moonlight*, which, up until now, was Daniel's poppiest affair to date.

If "You Got Yr. Cherry Bomb" and its lulling tambourine is Daniel's nod to Motown-inspired soul, then it's also an homage to the kinetic pop energy heard on *Kill the Moonlight*'s "The Way We Get By."

And if middle track "Rhythm & Soul," in all its piano-and-drum-goodness, is at all reminiscent of "All the Pretty Girls Go to the City," it's fair to say that Daniel saw something worth holding on to in his previous effort.

"You Got Yr. Cherry Bomb" easily is the album's strongest offering, with the ska-influenced "The Underdog" coming in a close second. "Black Like Me," the only song



MUSICREVIEW
SPOON
GA GA GA GA GA

★★★★☆

on *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga* that comes close to being called a ballad, proves to be a solid effort, as well, as does the downbeat "Don't You Evah."

Daniel knows what makes a great record — he's proved that four times over — and he also knows what his fans want to hear.

That's what makes Spoon one of the most reliable indie rock acts currently recording, and it's what makes *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*, without question, one of the best records of the year.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right?

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

'Phantom Limb' exorcises its emotions

BY BRYAN REED
SENIOR WRITER

Grindcore tends to be an exclusive, unapproachable genre.

Even its very name scares off plenty of listeners, and those brave enough to experiment usually find themselves repelled by the constant blast beats, insane tempos and growled vocals that sound as if they were ripped directly out of the singer's throat.

And Pig Destroyer does pretty much all of that on its latest album, *Phantom Limb*, the follow-up to 2004's acclaimed *Terrifier*.

The album's 14 songs are all brutal artillery blasts of pure and absolute death metal fury without all those wanky melodic guitar solos. The band's own description of its style as "deathgrind" seems perfectly suited.

In fact, *Phantom Limb* is such a grinding, rhythmic album, it

almost feels more like an aural beatdown than a collection of songs.

So basically, the band got exactly what it was going for.

But what makes Pig Destroyer and its album better than any run-of-the-mill death or grind record is that the songs actually do carry a sense of implied tunefulness and real emotional weight.

Pig Destroyer's riffs are as pummeling as they are impossible not to headbang to.

The sludge-drenched guitars are battered to hellacious levels of texture, warping and distorting the tone with false harmonics and squalls.

The low end keeps everything running at Armageddon pace with hairpin twists and turns in rhythm and time.

But most remarkable are the lyrics hidden under J.R. Hayes'

barely comprehensible screams and growls.

"Girl In The Slayer Jacket" is an emotionally devastating tale of teen suicide that is both bleak and horrifying while still being emotionally sincere and excruciating.

Yes, the band revels in the genre's typical use of gory b-movie imagery, most noted in "Deathripper" and "The Machete Twins," but those nuggets of heartfelt honesty, and even a twisted sweetness as on "Fourth Degree Burns," where Hayes spews, "She'll step on that plane and disappear, but tonight her lips are real and kissing like a head on collision."

Seeing a glimpse of humanity in an often cartoonish genre makes Pig Destroyer the type of grindcore band that won't disappoint fans of extreme metal, but might also have



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PHANTOM LIMB

★★★★☆

something special in store for that adventurous listener who might otherwise be turned off.

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

BAR EXAM

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"The essays are what I'm worried about the most," Abruzzini said.

Podger said there is no limit to the number of times a student can take the test.

"It is an expensive test costing \$600.00 and an extra \$100.00 if they want to use a laptop," she said.

"And not just students take it. People from outside the state who are wanting to move and practice here can take it also."

Students have plenty of options when it comes to preparing for the exam.

"Most students take commercial review classes known as the BARBRI and PNBRI. They are like Kaplan or the Princeton Review," Podger said.

"We offer a program called SOAR; it's a supplemental review session taught by one of the faculty TAs," she said.

The BARBRI class was offered in Chapel Hill from May 24th

through July 11th.

The course comes with about eight volumes of materials to help cover all the topics tested in both portions of the test.

Abruzzini said he took advantage of these classes to get ready for the exam.

"I've taken the BARBRI and the three day PNBRI class. I've pretty much been going over my BARBRI materials and making flashcards," Abruzzini said.

He added that he has been devoting a lot of time to studying as the exam date approaches.

"At this point I would say I'm studying about 10 to 12 hours a day," he said.

He said he will be relieved when the exam is behind him and he can finally put his books down.

"I'll be happy next Wednesday when it will be over," Abruzzini said.

"I'll probably get together with some friends and celebrate."

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DROWNING

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"I felt very close to Ian while I was there," she said.

She added that she was glad to have a place where she could go to remember her son.

Shawn Bailey said she plans to have a birthday celebration for Creath on July 31st — what would have been his 19th Birthday.

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DOMAIN

FROM PAGE 3

proposed constitutional amendment. It passed by a vote of 104-15, far more than the necessary three-fifths needed for such a measure.

Senate leaders sent the bill to the Ways and Means Committee on May 29, but no action has been taken. The session is winding down as final budget negotiations near a close.

"Unfortunately, the Ways and Means Committee has acquired a reputation for being the place where bills go to die," Berger wrote in a letter to Sen. Charlie Dannelly, the committee chairman.

Dannelly, D-Mecklenburg, said Tuesday he wouldn't know the bill's

fate until the committee meets. Sen. Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, who as Senate Rules Committee chairman controls the flow of legislation in the chamber, questioned whether the amendment was necessary: "I'm not aware that eminent domain has ever been abused in North Carolina."

Opponents argue that the amendment could discourage local governments from courting new businesses because it will be harder to accumulate large tracts of land.

Stam, a primary sponsor of the bill, wants the amendment question considered this year to allay suspicions that Republicans want it on the 2008 ballot to boost voter turnout during an election year for legislative candidates.

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