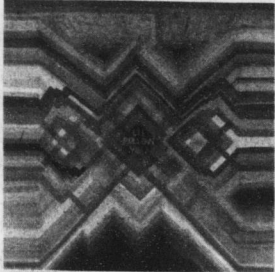


MUSIC SHORTS

OAKLEY HALL



I'LL FOLLOW YOU
ROCK/COUNTRY

★★★★☆
On its fourth album, *I'll Follow You*, Brooklyn's Oakley Hall crafts a brilliantly unique style indebted just as much to '60s psychedelia as it is to '70s Southern rock.

The excellent barnstormer, "No Dreams" blends the fire and brimstone of traditional country with a riff that recalls Cream-era Clapton.

But Oakley Hall's gifts don't stop at its ability to seamlessly blend such disparate styles. The band also shows off its excellent songwriting skills. "Rue the Blues" is a heartfelt and empowering breakup song and "Take My Hands, We're Free" is an ominous yet ultimately uplifting spiritual.

All the songs are delivered with fantastic instrumentation. From weaving fiddle to loud, rumbling guitar, all the parts resound vibrantly.

The real treat, though, is the excellent harmony between lead singers Patrick Sullivan and Rachel Cox.

Thanks to a unique style and wonderful songwriting, Oakley Hall blazes a trail that listeners should find impossible to resist following.

-Jordan Lawrence

U.R.F. MOVAS ENT.
DEATH B4 DISHONOR
HIP-HOP

★★★★☆
Once upon a time great rappers were marked not by how many times they'd been shot or what brand of jeans they wore, but by their charisma as entertainers.

The Triangle crew, U.R.F. Movas, shows itself to be a band of artists who know how to entertain.

Thematically, the group's songs revel in the kind of glorification of street crime that, true or not, guarantee escapist thrills. But unlike many of its peers, the U.R.F. Movas do it all in a way that comes across as witty and enthused.

O.Z. rhymes "Flip you up like Optimus Prime/Whip you up with

a Glock and a nine," on "Holdin' Out," one of the 21-track mixtape's standouts, over a quick-paced beat that makes the song as dance-floor-ready as it is lyrically demanding of its more-than-capable MC.

O.Z. and Co. (including rappers Young Jus, Jayeness and producer D-ablo, among others) carry the album with an uncanny consistency and skill rivaling any number of top selling hip-hop albums.

But that's not to say it's perfect by any means. O.Z.'s flow borrows heavily from Eminem, most notably on the horrorcore "Halloween Madness."

Production-wise, *Death B4 Dishonor* doesn't offer anything entirely new, its beats mesh easily with recognizable East Coast and Southeast sounds.

But what it does, it does well, and *Death B4 Dishonor* is chock-full of should-be-hits from a crew of hungry artists deserving of mainstream recognition.

-Bryan Reed

COCO
PLAY DRUMS + BASS
INDIE/ROCK

★★★★☆
COCO achieves a lot with a little on this album. *Play Drums + Bass* is exactly what it states, with some vocals as well. Olivia Ness' singing is sultry, with an explicit sway that comes from the minimalist structure of the band. This is most evident on "Your own secret way/Sly."

Other gems include "For You," "Crime" and the foreboding "Ess. Ay.," which features the band's other member, Chris Sutton, on lead vocals.

What's best about the album is that if you enjoy one song, you'll probably enjoy them all. It's a short, listenable album with no B.S. — or guitar.

-Sam Wineka

THE DIRTY PROJECTORS
RISE ABOVE
INDIE

★★★★☆
In 1981, the seminal California hardcore punk band Black Flag released its masterpiece, *Damaged*, fronted by a new singer, Henry Rollins, who lent the band a level of ferocity unmatched in the genre.

Damaged and Black Flag went on to become iconic in the realm of indie rock, as much for the band's aesthetic and DIY ethic as the music itself.

Fast forward 26 years and *Damaged* has been re-imagined under the creative efforts of Dave Longstreth, and his musical project The Dirty Projectors, and given the name *Rise Above*.

The Dirty Projectors' take on the seminal punk LP builds on the foundations of Greg Ginn's lyrics, changing the arrangements to a sound that is decidedly unhardcore. Clean-toned staccato guitar lines dodge and skitter around childlike vocal harmonies and Longstreth's off-kilter, warbling croon.

It's not totally off-base given the latter-day Black Flag's experimentalism, but the raw fury that made *Damaged* so affecting the first time is lost in The Dirty Projectors' orchestrated melodies and jazzy overtones.

Rise Above is certainly a creative reinvention of its source material, and one with a strange appeal spilling out of its sonic detours.

But it will never be the essential recording that *Damaged* is.

-Bryan Reed

VARIOUS ARTISTS



RED PETERS COMEDY MUSIC HOUR, BEST OF VOL. 1
COMEDY

★★★★☆
There are times when cursing is used by those with nothing else to say to cover up the fact that they have no real ideas.

Unfortunately, this is true of half the material featured on the first volume of "hits" from Sirius Radio's *Red Peters Comedy Music Hour*.

This isn't to say that there's nothing funny about the collection: Many of the zany, highly offensive song parodies featured on this collection are complete knockouts.

"The Hand of the Almighty" is a hilarious send up of conservative Christianity delivered in the style of traditional country and "If I Had the Copyright" is an interesting muse on what would happen if one obtained the rights to a certain word starting with "F."

There are a good deal of others worth mentioning, too, but all with titles too explicit to print.

The best moments of this disc are filled with gut-splitting laughs, but the other half leaves the listener frustrated, wondering what the artist was thinking.

The album's most abysmal cut, "Unwanted Rock Advance" is just a pile of bad heavy metal jokes built on the premise of rape.

It leaves listeners' ears violated enough to justify pressing charges.

In the whole of the album, there's not enough quality material to get more than just an initial

giggle out of the collection.
-Jordan Lawrence

PINBACK
AUTUMN OF THE SERAPHS
ROCK/INDIE

★★★★☆
The best aspect of *Autumn of the Seraphs*, the latest LP from Pinback, is how comfortably familiar the music feels.

There are times on the record when it would be quite easy to mistake Pinback's music here for the soft pop of Beck or Death Cab for Cutie.

The odd thing is that while this would be a cruel criticism of most records, for Pinback it's somewhat of a compliment.

The band gets the styles that it copies down to a tee — a true feat when compared with the excellent output of the artists that this album seems to aspire to.

"Good to Sea" grooves along like some of the very best of Beck's output and "Blue Harvest" could be the second coming of '80s-era Police.

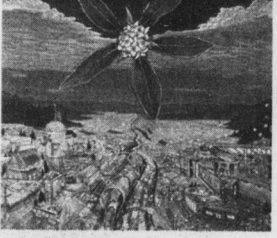
Still, there are too many irksome rip-offs on this collection for it to be completely satisfying.

The album has enough Coldplay-by-numbers piano and skittery drums to give detractors of this style a whopping headache.

So, while Pinback has enough talent that its collection of rehash is entertaining, it's hard to not be a bit cold toward it when every single trick here has been pulled before.

-Jordan Lawrence

ADRIAN ORANGE & HER BAND
ROCK/SKA



ADRIAN ORANGE & HER BAND
ROCK/SKA

★★★★☆
Adrian Orange & Her Band has a decent horn section, but one that highlights the band's self-titled album. Its clunky drums and pitiful vocals are just distractions that get in the way.

"A Flower Is Mine" features a lead vocalist, not specifically named among the 17 vocalists in the liner notes, who cries like a wounded dog begging for mercy. The effect only makes the listener uncomfortable, if not squeamish.

Sudden screeches leave a bad taste, taking away from pseudo-reggae backbeats that mark the rest of the songs.

The horn section saves a few songs, namely the opener "Window (Mirror) Shadow," but it's still probably better to leave *Adrian Orange* on the shelf.

-Sam Wineka

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE



DTH/BRYAN REED

Clad in a T-shirt endorsing the black metal band Dark Throne, Durham resident John Darnielle, aka The Mountain Goats headlined the "Reach for the Sky" benefit show at Cat's Cradle Thursday with a solo acoustic set. Local rockers Bellafeia and The Moaners opened the show.

Kanye comes out stronger than 50

BY LUIS TORRES
STAFF WRITER

50 Cent and Kanye West. They're rap's bad guys, rap's spoiled brats and rap's two biggest stars.

The media — and the rappers themselves — have hyped their simultaneous album releases as an old-fashioned show down, with the loser getting out of town.

50 went as far as promising to stop doing solo music if he sells less than Kanye on opening week.

Well, if sales reflect overall album quality, it may be time for 50 to start job hunting.

Lyrical, *Curtis* is mostly uninspired and sorely lacking in creativity.

A quick glance down the tracklist reveals as much, with song titles such as "My Gun Go Off," "Man Down," and "Fully Loaded Clip" hinting not too subtly at the subject matter of 75 percent of *Curtis*'s songs.

The rest of the album consists of radio-friendly manufactured tracks obviously aimed at covering all of hip-hop's cliché bases, mainly party anthems and love songs.

But, with a little help from his friends, 50 Cent's latest album still isn't bad.

A slew of no-name producers provide a backdrop of excellent beats, and a few veterans such as Timbaland and Dr. Dre lend a hand, making *Curtis* a stand-out album, musically at least.

And even 50's words aren't completely terrible.

He's always had a sardonic, slightly evil sense of humor in his lyrics and he hasn't lost his touch here. "I Get Money" is 50 at his finest, bragging about his cash for the hundredth time and injecting enough charisma to keep it entertaining.

50's problem with lyrics is something Kanye West doesn't have to worry about.

Graduation has two poorly writ-

MUSIC REVIEW

KANYE WEST
GRADUATION
HIP-HOP

★★★★☆

50 CENT
CURTIS
HIP-HOP

★★★★☆

ten songs: lead single "Stronger," a lame attempt at party-rap that Kanye butchers and is only salvaged by its genius Daft Punk sample, and "Drunk and Hot Girls," a track that is as bland as its title.

But the other eleven songs on Kanye's third solo album map Kanye's psyche, addressing his self doubt, arrogance and even his private problems with Jay-Z.

Graduation is a completely personal album in which Kanye wears his emotions on his sleeve and, after years of corny puns and cheesy punch lines, finally evolves into a lyrically excellent rapper.

Unfortunately, Kanye's production hasn't made the leaps and bounds that his rapping has.

This isn't to say that the music on *Graduation* isn't great — it is, it's just not Kanye's best.

But when he does have a bad beat, Kanye usually saves the songs with his lyrics and makes his voice the star.

50 doesn't leave his comfort zone on *Curtis*, so he shows off everything that he does best with his third major label album, but it's all stuff we've heard before.

Kanye's made the better album, releasing a daring, varied product that flexes his versatility and talent and proves that even bad guys can have their good moments.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

CAROLINA SPORTS MENU

This Week's Menu

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