

CCL: A GATEWAY DRUG

Chatham County Line is the type of band that appeals to a wide swath of music fans.

On the surface, the bluegrass elements are obvious, but digging just a little deeper will reveal plenty of alt. country, roots and other Americana elements.

The band released its fourth LP, *IV*, this week and will give it a proper celebration Friday at Cat's Cradle.

Assistant Diversions Editor Jamie Williams chatted with CCL frontman Dave Wilson in advance of that show about Tift Merritt, bluegrass as a genre and the good manners of Dutch audiences.

Diversions: With the new record coming out this week, you must be pretty excited.

Dave Wilson: I'm real excited about this week. It's time to get back to work.

I'm getting ready to have a cold beer and think about it.

Dive: Sounds like a lot of cold beer goes into making your records?

DW: Yeah man, why not?

Dive: That's how plenty of bands start, right? As a way to drink beer with your buddies?

DW: One thing led to another, and, as a big Gram Parsons fan, I started playing some music with some fellows and one thing led to another.

We went on tour with Tift Merritt for a while, and ended up getting a record deal. It's been a great ride.

Dive: Speaking of Tift, it's pretty cool that you guys' record comes out the week after hers.

DW: I know. I've listened to it, and it is great. I love that girl. We saw her on the Jay Leno show last week. We're still friends with all them, and I thought it was great. She really knocked it out of the park.

Dive: I saw that, too. She's really making waves.

DW: Totally, man. She's killin' it. This record's gonna do a lot for her.

Dive: What about you? Do you have any goals for this record?

DW: We're definitely in it for



COURTESY OF YEP-ROCK RECORDS

Chatham County Line will bring its lively bluegrass-influenced music to Cat's Cradle Friday in honor of the release of *IV*. The Everybodyfields open.

the long run. It started out as a way to just hang out and have some fun, but, man, then it turned into a job, and we really enjoy it.

We just want to keep doing it and making stronger and stronger music, adding to the legacy of the genre of music we make. It's a dream come true.

Dive: You guys definitely have bluegrass influence, but there is plenty of other stuff as well. How do you define the sound?

DW: You can't hide your influence. I mean, I'd never heard bluegrass until college. I had no idea what the deal was, no idea about the genre. I spent a lot of years hanging out with the guys in the band, and we've all been in rock bands.

Everything is gonna show up when we hit record.

Dive: Do you think that draws in more people who may not like traditional bluegrass?

DW: That's what we want. We're the gateway drug for bluegrass.

Dive: What do you have planned for the release show this week?

DW: We're gonna try and get some special guests out and learn some weird songs to play. The Cradle's the best. It's the place we want to play. I know we're from Raleigh, but the Cradle audience is just awesome. They are really respectful and really respect you.

Dive: Do you have big touring plans to support the record?

DW: We're gonna head to Texas for SXSW and then do a few Heartland shows. We're really here, there and everywhere.

We'll do festivals in Portland, New York, over in Ireland, Norway and some in Holland. We'll do a week in the U.K.

It'll be a lot of pickin'.

Dive: How does the Dutch bluegrass crowd compare to the Cradle?

DW: They're good. They are so respectful, and they don't yell out during the show.

My first time there, I thought we sucked because no one responded. There were no rebel yells or people getting excited, but you learn from exposure that they just don't do that.

They are so polite, and they wait until the end of the song and then they pay their respects.

Dive: What do you prefer: the raucous shows or the crowds that sit back and just listen?

DW: A good balance between everything is good. We love the theater shows, and then we also love the loud, drunken bar shows. I mean, that's why we've done four years of Christmas shows at the Pour House in Raleigh. It's tight and loud and smoky, but we love it.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

CCL gives tradition a kick

BY JORDAN LAWRENCE

STAFF WRITER

Traditionalism is a hard flag to fly.

When playing traditional forms — such as bluegrass — it's difficult to strike a balance between vivacious artistic expression and reverence to the time-honored expectations of the craft.

Chatham County Line manages to accomplish both on its fourth long-player.

Taking exquisitely-played contemporary bluegrass and garnishing it with other country instrumentation (namely, steel guitar, harmonica and organ), the band creates a product that's warm, inviting and invigorating.

Captured in wonderful clarity, *IV* keeps enough familiar bluegrass elements to lasso the listener right in.

But thanks to the band's musical creativity and solid songwriting,

Chatham County Line also creates a record that remains interesting on repeated listens.

Principal songwriter Dave Wilson delivers tunes full of delightful country wisdom as comfortably obvious as a rocking chair and a glass of ice-cold lemonade on a hot Southern afternoon.

"You can't thank nobody for a romance with a postcard," Wilson wryly jokes on "Thanks" with such an audible air of good-heartedness that he might as well have begun the line with, "Well, bless your heart."

Wilson is just as convincing when he challenges the listener to match his level of desperation in "I Got Worry."

But it's the barnstorming social commentary of "Birmingham Jail" that exemplifies what Chatham County Line does best.

Harnessing a fiddle-banjo duel

MUSICREVIEW

CHATHAM COUNTY LINE

IV

BLUEGRASS/COUNTRY

★★★★☆

full of so much fire that it feels as though it's been going on forever, Wilson lashes out with brimstone-laden fury against the racist history of the South.

"Birmingham Jail" takes grand old bluegrass traditions and plays them with such perfection that the song becomes timeless.

With such performances, *IV* proves that bluegrass music is one of those things that just never gets old — so long as it's delivered with the confident craftsmanship and reverence that Chatham County Line displays.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

Racy 'Boleyn Girl' lacks substance

BY DAVID BERNGARTT

STAFF WRITER

Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson star in the racy period piece about the adulterous King Henry VIII and his sibling mistresses.

Full of sex, cheating, backstabbing, and yes, even incest, "The Other Boleyn Girl" still comes off the Hollywood production line feeling empty.

Portman succeeds as the manipulative and powerful Anne Boleyn, while she's juxtaposed by her sweet and unassuming sister Mary Boleyn (Johansson).

The two are thrown into both the king's bed and his politics as Henry tries to conceive a male heir and satiate his lust.

Portman is the best talent in "The Other Boleyn Girl." She's seductive and treacherous but still shows a chord of vulnerability. Her lines, however, fail to give her a chance to shine.

The utilitarian script really just ties the action together — rather than artfully weaving dialogue — which is an opportunity the genre so easily offers.

The production is the quality you'd expect from an A-list period piece.

MOVIE REVIEW

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL

★★★★☆

The movie could be given kudos for the interesting and risqué plot, but the real credit belongs to the truth of history and the book it was based on.

While it maintains interest, "The Other Boleyn Girl" is really only as entertaining as a good history lecture on the actual story.

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