

# College not immune to (ob)noxious disease

Watch out: There's a contagious illness in town, and you could be the next victim.

But don't worry — there are obvious symptoms that, if caught early, can be kept under control.

If you look in the mirror and see an androgynous, unwashed haircut that looks like it was cut by a 4-year-old using plastic scissors, this could be the first sign.

If your eyes suddenly become hollow, black and smudged, you are probably suffering from over-indulgence in eyeliner, which is another common early symptom.

If you're a male, you might even find yourself gravitating toward the women's jeans department. Be warned: Proudly flaunting your circulation-cutting pants almost certainly means you've caught the dreaded emo-scene-kid disease.

Scene-kid infections were once thought to affect only mad-at-the-world 14-year-olds still stumbling their way through high school.

Sadly, these germs seem to have been spreading into once unknown territory: college students.

I thought I would be safe from the scene kids when I joined some of the brightest minds in the country at UNC. No longer would I have to worry about catching the misery that afflicts them daily. But when I walked into Hinton James as an innocent freshman, I saw that this would not be the case.

I saw several students outside smoking clove cigarettes, clad in their Chuck Taylors and size-XS Dashboard Confessional T-shirts. As they discussed their latest blog post on MySpace, I realized that



MELISSA BROWN  
SLIP-SLIDIN' AWAY

the disease had hit my beloved town of Chapel Hill.

How could I have been so naive? Just because the town is full of scholarly students and fantastic local music doesn't mean that it's immune.

The victims can't help that they all suffer in exactly the same way — I mean, it's not as if they choose to have the exact same haircut, clothes and general lingo.

And of course they aren't purposely elitist. Yes, they reject people who aren't exactly like them, but it's only because they care enough to not want anyone else to get infected.

For these students, a cure might have been out of reach. Their situation was clearly dire — a few even cried as they listened to Bright Eyes through oversized headphones.

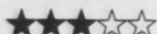
But for the rest of us, it's not too late to stop the spreading of emo-scene-kid disease. Just light-en up, turn on Comedy Central, and maybe even go to a local show or two sans eyeliner.

If you start to develop emo-scene-kid disease, please go back to high school, where the other afflicted souls will be waiting for you.

Contact Melissa Brown at [mjbrown@email.unc.edu](mailto:mjbrown@email.unc.edu).

## MUSIC SHORTS

**DEVOTCHKA**  
**A MAD AND FAITHFUL TELLING**  
ROCK



Music can speak for itself. After gaining attention for scoring "Little Miss Sunshine," former burlesque show backing band DeVotchKa stays true to its sound on its latest release, *A Mad and Faithful Telling*.

The group's central quartet covers a madcap variety of sounds, with guitars, theremin, piano, trumpet, violin, accordion, sousaphone, acoustic bass and percussion.

This, augmented by additional violin, viola, cello and oboe, and the gypsy ensemble is complete. The arrangements are moving to the point of genius, built of intoxicating complexity that frequently climaxes into sonic ecstasies.

But when the warbles of lead singer Nick Urata jump into the spotlight, they take away from the mini-symphony's instrumental mastery.

The battle to find harmony creates a distracting internal struggle and only rarely do the vocals mesh with the stirring sounds. It's an unfortunate handicap that prevents a potential classic.

-Edwin Arnaudin

**HOWLIN' RAIN**  
**MAGNIFICENT FIEND**  
ROCK



*Magnificent Fiend* has 1960s rock scrawled all over it.

A watercolor butterfly graces the cover. Electric organ permeates tracks with as much robustness as the rich guitar riffs.

The lyrics are abstruse, and many could be likened to those of the Grateful Dead, whose *Lonely Town* is also alluded to.

Howlin' Rain's second LP — first with its new lineup — is rife with psychedelic overtones, and not a song runs less than five minutes in length or is safe from a rhythmic change or two.

Vocalist and songwriter Ethan Miller scores high with the modern pulp story "El Ray" but continues to push several other songs too far, reaching beyond their limits trying to showcase the already evident virtuosity of the performers.

The band's organic arrangement and wide array of guitars present themselves favorably, but the novelty of having an entire album completely reminiscent of a time past runs thin by the halfway point and makes you ready to give most of the songs the peace sign before they're finished.

-Benn Wineka

**THE FOXGLOVE HUNT**  
**STOP HEARTBEAT**  
POPELECTRONIC



Reminiscing is the key in The Foxglove Hunt's *Stop Heartbeat*.

The band brings back a shimmering version of '80s dance music and gives it a modern electronica twist. Familiar, retro-sounding tunes flow through this album like comfortable memories of the past.

This doesn't make the album innovative, but it produces nostalgia that makes for solid dance party music. But solid is far too safe, and at times the songs are flat.

Along with every melodic beat and sharp keyboard comes the feeling that it's all been done before.

That's not to say the album has no original moments — the ghostly whispering in "It's Not Effective" will leave listeners bobbing their heads while chilled with mystery.

The soft, mumbling vocals make it nearly impossible to clearly understand the lyrics, but words aren't what the album relies on, and the songs comfortably take their place as leisurely paced dance music.

This album is a pleasurable one, and this band is one from which to look forward to future releases.

But it is disappointing that a much better album could have been

produced if a little more adventure had been added in the mix.

-Melissa Brown

**MIWA GEMINI**  
**THIS IS HOW I FOUND YOU**  
FOLK/POP



It's odd to say about an album composed of nine tracks that lasts less than 35 minutes, but every song on Miwa Gemini's *This Is How I Found You* drags on for too long.

The New York singer's charming, though often vapid, bedroom pop could be far more effective if administered in smaller doses.

Gemini's delicate voice and whimsical lyrics work well over the soft guitar picking and drums that comprise most of the arrangements.


But every song pushes beyond the point at which it could have comfortably ended.

For instance, any two of the adorable verses of "Something Ordinary" would have been enough, but instead the song drags on for six minutes, losing all of its wonderful immediacy.

The effect of *This Is How I Found You* becomes like an awkwardly long hug.

The embrace is nice and warm at first, but it just gets uncomfortable when the person won't let go.

-Jordan Lawrence



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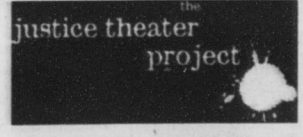
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


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