

Chicago's The Cool Kids party like it's 1988 again

BY JAMIE WILLIAMS
SENIOR WRITER

Harkening back to the days when hip-hop was more concerned with partying, rocking fly kicks and standard drum machine beats, The Cool Kids' debut, *The Bake Sale*, is a cohesive collection of minimal beats and agile rhymes.

The duo of Chuck English and Mikey Rocks recall A Tribe Called Quest's heyday with minimal beats and songs perfectly prepared to pound trunks all summer.

The pair brings to its debut equal parts party rap and lyrical mediation on a life honed on classic hip-hop LPs.

The Cool Kids were the suburban kids (one from Chicago, the other from Detroit) that late '80s Def Jam records were geared toward.

And it sounds as though they ate it up, learning from the work of

MUSICREVIEW

THE COOL KIDS
THE BAKE SALE
HIP-HOP



Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons.

The crux of the record is basically sewn up on the first track, "What Up Man," when English raps, "FYI I'm F-L-Y," over a beat of the Kids' repeated "tick-tick-clap," imitating the classic 808 beats of the landmark records that The Cool Kids reference.

And when they start the next track, "One Two," with the admission that they are "the young, black version of the Beastie Boys," the image-building is complete.

And image is important to The Cool Kids.

From their vintage apparel to their rhymes about BMX bikes, they want everyone to know just how cool they actually are.

In many ways, The Cool Kids represent a movement within music as a whole.

The two MCs met on MySpace, and at least three of *The Bake Sale's* 10 tracks were circulated widely on the Internet several months before any official release.

But those tracks still offer amazingly catchy, incredibly accurate —

but never heavy-handed — looks at hip-hop past and present.

It is a testament to the skills exhibited on the album that though much of the material has made the rounds, the record still sounds fresh. And the previously unheard tracks only bolster *The Bake Sale*.

The best track here is "88," featuring a hook first used by Nas on his retro-tinged single "Made You Look." English and Rocks rhyme like it's, well, 1988. Over an industrial beat, the Kids promote retro Nikes and rooftop parties.

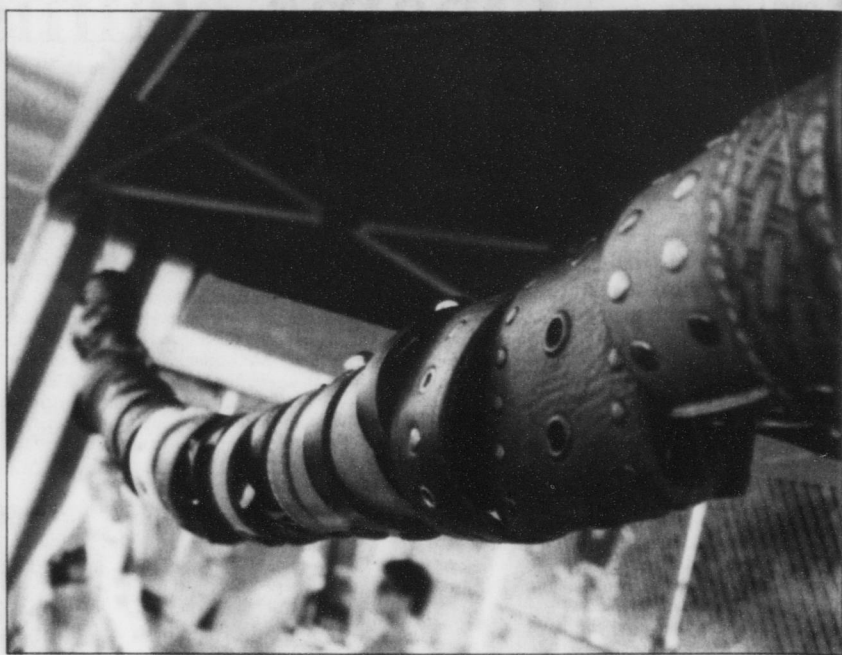
"You need to take some classes on how to be cool/In fact I'm superintendent of the school," is a simple enough declaration, right?

There are times, though, where it gets a little tedious and a bit too contrived.

But the record's short 30 minutes save it from itself, and it ends up as a fun listen from a duo who has earned its buzz, proving themselves more than capable MCs and producers.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

TOUGH AS LEATHER



DTHALLIE MULLIN

Handmade leather bracelets lined a booth at TRKfest, an all-day music festival sponsored by Chapel Hill's Trecky Records on May 31. The festival featured many of the label's bands, as well as others from the Triangle. In addition to the music, local vendors were given the opportunity to sell their products. Those products included homemade dresses, art work, hand-screened posters and leather belts.

STARSYSTEM

- ★ POOR
- ★★ FAIR
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★★★ EXCELLENT
- ★★★★★ CLASSIC

Movie lives up to high 'Sex'-pectations

BY RACHAEL OEHRING
STAFF WRITER

I have a dirty little secret. I love "Sex and the City."

I've been watching it since my early teens, back when it seemed the most scandalous thing on HBO, and though I'm an overly sarcastic, Vans-sporting feminazi, I can't even try to lie and say that I haven't been looking forward to this movie since about 2005.

And lo! After months of ridiculous product tie-ins and the most bloated, obnoxious advertising campaign since "Indiana Jones and the

Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," it is finally here. And it's not that bad.

The movie sees Carrie Bradshaw and her flock of relationship-challenged hangers-on through a tumultuous year, backed by a rockin' Fergie soundtrack, and though it sounds terrifying, it's really entertaining.

The movie is beautiful, filled with amazing shoes and clothes, and the story goes down interesting directions that help it transcend romantic-comedy cliché.

The acting is surprisingly genuine all around. Sarah Jessica Parker always surprises every time she has

MOVIE REVIEW
SEX AND THE CITY



to show any emotion.

There's a palpable giddiness in the performances of all the leads that's never quite apparent in the show. These ladies obviously really are excited to be slipping back into the characters that brought them international fame and fortune.

The only blight is Jennifer Hudson's performance as the wide-eyed Midwesterner hired to sort Carrie's life after disaster.

Apparently, after getting the boot from "American Idol," someone told Hudson she should try her hand at acting. Then someone else decided to maintain this charade by giving her an Oscar. There's not even an awkwardly inserted musical number to give any reason for her existence.


For all the haters out there, the movie is all the things everyone says about it: it's vapid; the plot's too convenient; it's filled with clothes and shoes and dumb talks of love.

But instead of being a love letter to New York or relationships, as the show was, it's a love letter to the fans of the show who made it a ubiquitous pop-culture icon. And it's perfect.

It's funny (mostly because the groaning puns are kept to a minimum), and the overarching themes of friendship transcending any guy problems undercut cynicism brought with the characters' encroaching old age.

If you're not into "Sex and the City," you will hate this movie, but if you still watch the lame, badly censored version every week on TBS, this will be exactly what you've been waiting for.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.



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