

Music Reviews

Salt

Auscultate
MVG Records

Punk, Thrash, Trippy...all words that can be applied to the sound of Salt. The smooth voice of the female singer lingers in a catchy off-tune tone. "I got your name on my lips, I got your face in my eyes, I got your breath in my mouth, I got your smell on my body"...these are the lyrics to "Obsession", the fifth song on the track. Song six, "Bluster", has a strong, addictive beat. The openings of the majority of their songs begin mellow, jumping from trippy punk to punky thrash. Imagine a stream flowing gently until suddenly it plummets over an escarpment...this is Salt, deceptively serene, but suddenly plummeting into a churning gushing musicfall...looking beautiful and dangerous.

Rating: ***1/2

By: Cindy Venema

Universal Honey

Earth Moon Transit
Honey Tunes

Their sound is futuristic eighties. It makes me feel like am sitting in a movie where Molly Ringwald is asking me how pink looks on her, only she wants to wear combat boots with the shoulderless pink dress. The cd contains songs with titles such as "Moon Moon", "She loves You" and "Nightmare". There is groove to the music; but, there is no originality to the groove. The cd is full of pop that isn't bad, but it isn't something that stands out like a red tulip amongst the daffodils. The female vocalist sounds a bit like Suzanna Hoffs from the Bangles; hence, the feeling of unoriginality. If you like predictable and you like the song, "Walk Like an Egyptian", then you may like Universal Honey. Their songs are sweet, sticky, and boringly universal.

Rating: **

By: Cindy Venema

Suckerpunch

Suckerpunch
MCA Music

Hello Green Day? Oops, no it's Suckerpunch. Well, despite the similar sound, this band is fun listening. Their first song definitely opens with a punch both musically and lyrically... "You're at the top of my shitlist". The songs are fast and the lyrics are entertaining. Track six, "Stagnation Street", is a change from the other songs; the music isn't so much punk as it is a cross between Metallica and Rod Stewart. Their songs are pleasantly varied, while still managing to maintain a constant "sound". "I sit on the front steps awaiting for you, I am under the daze since my last issue...Magazine! Everything that I could never be. The perfect hair with the perfect tie". Their songs aren't deep with meaning; rather, they are straight, blunt views of life. So are we suckers if we listen to this Green Dayish band...perhaps, but their music is fun.

Rating: ***

By: Cindy Venema

Social Distortion

White Light White Heat
White Trash
Epic

When I first saw the video for "I Was Wrong" I thought that the term "white power" should be included in the title as well, from the appearance of the lead singer, in particular. Power, though, in fact is the correct word to describe the music of Social Distortion. Or more precisely-power chord. Most of the songs are constructed of simple, but catchy chord progressions, backed up by ripping guitar solos, and exceptional drum patterns, that possess a substantial volume in order to cover up the angst-ridden, raspy voice of the singer. All in all, Social Distortion could probably be compared to a more complicated, and yet less upbeat form of Green Day. In other words, they've caught on to the new wave of punk rock that has swept across the music industry, and that has had a lot of influence on the direction of music the past while. Hence, if you enjoy catchy tunes, heavy guitar, and songs that are about--well, the same thing that a lot of songs are about, then get this. However for a closer analyses of the band, just translate one of the many meanings behind their name: They are a band that writes heavy songs, for the interest and taste of their listeners. This is evident from the first track, the "Zombie-sque" "Dear Lover", to the last shallow tune on the album. In short, Social Distortion are wanderers in a well-trodden area.

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Todd MacLean

Play Reviews

By Bruce Henry and Cindy Venema

The Fifteen Minute Hamlet

"This hilarious play offers its audience an extremely abbreviated version of the Bard's most famous work, delivered at breakneck speed, and provides a casket full of laughs along the way," stated Bruce Barton, chair of the theatre society. The first night "was exciting, especially the encore," for Ryan Pollard, who played Ophelia and Gertrude, unlike the rehearsals he had never seen the encore done so quickly. The second night, Ryan said, "it was our finest performance with every thing falling into place, just the way we wanted it to be". The third night was the "craziest" even though their performance was as good perhaps better than the two previous nights, receiving the greatest reaction from the audience that evening.

"The Fifteen Minute Hamlet", although enjoyable, had a few outstanding flaws to the viewer. The timing in the play could perhaps have been quicker, the lighting could have been more effective, and actors could have been more comical. The play was obviously a spoof of Shakespeare's great play, and the actors therefore should have been more obviously sarcastic, blundering, and annoying than they were, so as to portray a "wanna-be-great" play that did not quite cut it.

The majority of people I spoke to said they enjoyed the encore the most. This super condensed version of Hamlet was done quickly, creating a comical commotion that kept the audience laughing. The speed for the encore looked as though someone hit the fast forward button of a VCR while watching a movie.

The Valiant

Bruce Barton spoke of *The Valiant* as a "twentieth century American play that explores issues of crime, punishment and redemption, as it tells the story of a condemned man's last hours, and as those around him frantically try to determine his identity." For Laura Smith, lighting technician, the play "was very emotional and the actors were very convincing." I personally preferred *The Valiant* over *Hamlet* since I'm not an enormous William Shakespeare fan. However, an audience member told me the relationship between Warden Holt and Dyke (the prisoner) should of been much friendlier. They saw the play before and interpreted the Warden's and Dyke's relationship differently than what was expressed in UPEI's performance of the play.

The plot of this play compared to the first play contained a deeper emotional tone. Considering the complex emotions that the characters were supposed to express the actors performed exceedingly well. However, the relationships between the Dyke and the Warden and Dyke and his sister could have contained more depth, and mystery. This play seems to be highly dependent on close, endearing interaction between all the characters, despite the ever-present desire to identify Dyke's true past. And so when Dyke walks through the door, to his death, there should be a sense of valiance, respect, and the utter loss of a friend...a tough emotional scene to master. So while the acting was good, the emotion of grief was not fully purged from this viewer.

After the plays were finished each actor won a merit award as a reminder for their participation in the play. And for those who did attend *The Valiant*, Paul Trahan, who played Wilson (The Jailer), won the best line award for "Yes, Sir".