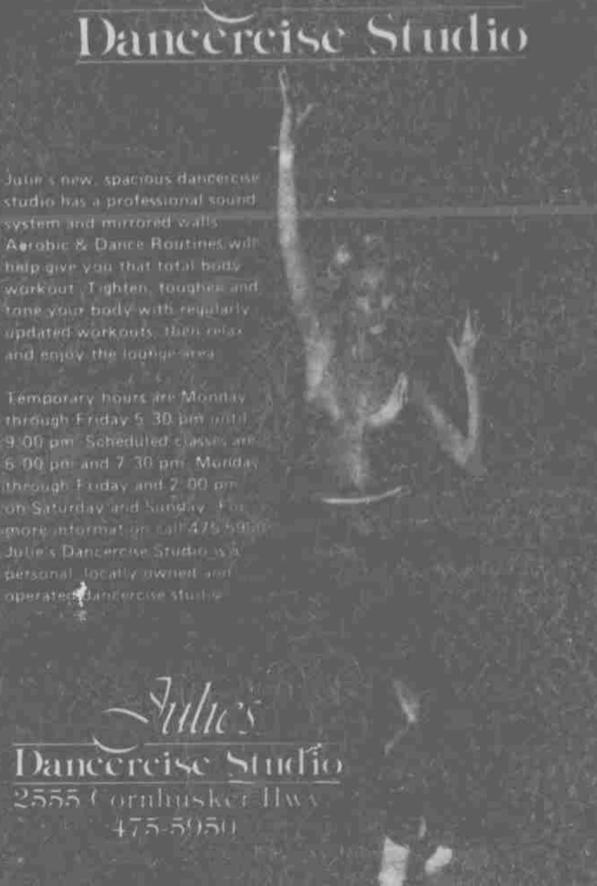


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Culture Club album disappointing; state songs, no verve mar effort



Courtesy of Epic Records

By Scott Harrah

Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Just two years ago, an unknown British band named Culture Club released a mawkish little ditty titled, "Do You Really Wanna Hurt Me." The song seemed a bit trite and so it sat at the bottom of the charts until MTV released the video of the tune. People were shocked by the crooning girl clad in a composite of Jamaican, Hasidic and thrift store garb with pancake makeup on her face. But when word got out that this girl was really a guy named Boy George, the song soared up the charts and the world fell in love with the singing transvestite.

Today, Boy George is not only a

pop paragon, but a commodity and a trendsetter as well.

However, his schtick is wearing off and he better start proving that he's more than a novelty item if he wants to survive. He'd better try harder as his group's latest opus, *Waking Up With the House On Fire*, is far from hot.

The first song, "Dangerous Man," is a dull tune that sounds like it's off in some perplexed orbit, not really sure whether it wants to be mellow or high-spirited. Next comes the silly single, "The War Song" — which resembles a political nursery rhyme. The chorus is a bit inane, but backup vocalist Helen Terry and Boy's lyrics give it some intelligence.

"Man is far behind/In search of something new/like a Philistine/We're burning witches, too."

George's experimentation with vintage musical styles, in the past, has been rather inept, but he does quite well on the 50s-flavored tune, "Crime Time" — laden with lots of sax, vivacious vocals and catchy hooks.

"The Dive" opens side two. It's a quirky, crescendoing dance num-

ber that sports some brisk acoustic guitar riffs, but Boy's vocals are too flippant to make it flow. The calypso-tinged aura of the band's first album shows up on "The Medal Song" — but the piece is too cute to be convincing. The "doo wahs" of early Motown are present on "Mannequin," a delightfully redundant tune with sickeningly sentimental lyrics. After all this civilized boredom, along comes "Hello Goodbye" to wake us all up with its horrific heavy metal guitar odysseys, driving beat and harmonic vocals. It's one of the best Culture Club numbers ever and will surely be one of the few big hits on this disappointing album.

The trouble with this LP is that it lacks the verve of the band's previous works and the once outrageous Boy George has become indolent, relying on his looks rather than his talent to sell records. For every inventive song on *Waking Up With the House On Fire*, there are two stale ones. Perhaps Britain's most infamous androgynous should retitlle his latest effort *Wake Us When This Album's Over*.

'Alamo' . . .

Continued from Page 8

Cowboy is hit especially hard when Steve, an antagonist, utters, "What's the matter Cowboy, afraid you're gonna lose your chance to be a hero?" This is the one place where Cowboy is a hero, a notch above the regulars. He dreams of an elusive movie career and sees himself as a rugged, John Wayne type. Cowboy is a victim of progress, the last of the stereotypical cowboy genre. The demolition of The Alamo hits him especially hard since it is the only place where he can justify his sense of self-importance.

Getting involved in the action are Lisa and Ginger, two women

who would be more comfortable at the local disco, but probably just felt like slumming it and decided to check out the scene there.

But none of the characters really want to be at The Alamo. Cowboy would rather be in Hollywood replacing John Wayne, despite his bald spot which he covers with his Stetson; Ichabod would rather be at the Paradise Motel, despite the reluctance of his girlfriend; and Claude would rather be home with his suburban family, despite his disgust over the fact that his children have their own telephone listing.

The regulars, except Cowboy, decide that they will just change

their hangout to the nearest yankee joint, The B & B.

After violence breaks out between Steve and Cowboy, the bartender decides it is time to close earlier than expected. Everyone except Cowboy deserts the saloon. The bartender tells him, "Stay if you want, it's your own funeral."

Life will go on for the other characters, but as the neon fades from the bar signs and The Alamo is demolished, a part of Cowboy is buried also. A victim of change and poor judgment, his identity will be lost.

Steven Matilla, as Ichabod the scummy regular, is superb. The best performance though, is given by Henry Wideman, the resident wino, who brings heart and soul to a character with few lines and limited exposure. Cowboy, played by Sonny Carl Davis, is disappointing. Though his acting is adequate, he looks more like the good Humor Man than a pseudo-John Wayne.

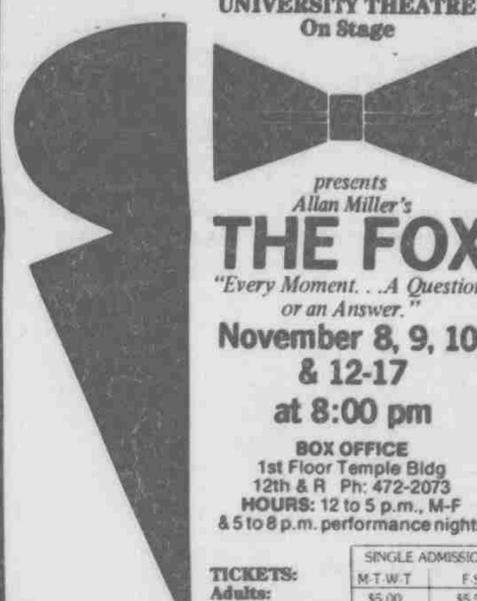
The screenplay, written by Kim Henker, is a definite step above his only previous script, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre." The dialogue is so genuine, and down to blue-collar earth, that it is easy to empathize with the troubles and low-rent dreams of the regular customers of The Alamo.

"Last Night at the Alamo" has the feel of a play. Because it was filmed in black and white, the film has the look of a dimly lit stage. It focuses on words, characters and emotions, rather than action or special effects.

"Last Night at the Alamo" proves that excellent movie making is alive and well, and living between coasts.

"Last Night at the Alamo" will be at the Sheldon Film Theatre at 8 p.m. tonight through Saturday.

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