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Review Board . . .

Kate Bush, "The Whole Story" (EMI)

Kate Bush is one of the most misunderstood, underrated talents in the British musical hall of fame. Her music has always been difficult to classify. Is she newwave, avantgarde, performance art? The theories vary.

Since the late '70s, Bush has churned out some of the most eerie, folk-based progressive music within the boundaries of so-called "art-rock." Her resonant, girlish whine of a voice plus the use of fiddles and synthesizers and lyrics that sound like demented parables create a sound that's had critics both enchanted and perplexed. A Rolling Stone reviewer once said that Bush's music sounded like "the consequences of mating Patti Smith with a Hoover vacuum cleaner."

Bush is the William S. Burroughs of the sugar and spice set, sweetening her dolorous vision with innocent-sounding vocals and enough Irish underpinnings to make all the lyrical chaos appear commonplace. But her unpleasant imagery and messages are still there, concealed under lots of orchestration and industrial fairy tales.

Bush's musical forte is her ability to probe into the lower depths of fear and surface with an often-whimsical tale about the darkness she loves to glorify. On last year's phenomenal "Hounds of Love" LP, the song "Under Ice" told the story of a girl drowning after falling into a hole in a frozen lake. It's images like these that set her apart from the Nina Hagen-Patti Smith school of feminine freakdom.

"The Whole Story" is merely a collection of her best work from previous albums, although a new cut, "Experiment IV," is included. "Wuthering Heights," "Army Dreamers," "Cloudbusting" and most of her other European hits illuminate the compendium, offering a look at each stage in her highly obscure career.

Bush has never had a hit in America and the only exposure she's ever had have been a few paltry "Saturday Night Live" appearances and some forgotten videos on MTV. Some have said she's merely trying to grasp Laurie Anderson's visual-performance platitudes — and her live shows tend to fall into them — but that's where the comparison ends.

Bush is a quirky talent, reaching into the soggy ashes of surrealism and pulling out morbid, unsettling interpretations of lunacy that are made palatable by her decorative octaves and poetic insistence. But her Sylvia Plathesque lyrical madness will probably keep her deeply buried in the subterranean "art rock" label, waiting to be recognized as the one person who truly deserves a wider audience in America.

—Scott Harrah

Love and Rockets, "Express" (RCA)

In 1983, Bauhaus, the leading voices in glam death rock, split up, marketing more successful versions of their synthesis of "Diamond Dogs"-era David Bowie and Joy Division in the group's Love and Rockets and Tones on Tail. Tones on Tail got Peter Murphy, whose exhibitionist anguish led Bauhaus. Love and Rockets got Bauhaus' darkly psychedelic buzzsaw guitars. I guess who wins depends on your taste.

Aside from a really miscast cover of the Temptation's '70s hit, "Ball of Confusion" that nearly derails the album on the end of the first side, "Express" is adventurous, completely accessible pop that moves from acoustic balladry to "White Album" studio psychedelia to midtempo riff-rockers without sounding like a schizophrenic hodge-podge. The mood of the hallucinogenic journey is continued throughout.

The classic on the album is "Kundalini Express," a song with enough veiled sexual references to have the Parent's Music Resource Center pouring over the Kama Sutra and various other Hindu texts for months. "Kundalini" barrels along as if the Union Pacific had just put up a depot for the Wabash Cannonball in Haight-Ashbury, chugging effortlessly on a T-Rex guitar mutation that should send Power Supply,

especially Duran's Andy Taylor, back to beginning guitar lessons. Meanwhile, vocals make detours through the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields" and the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil."

The best thing about "Express" is that it never tries too hard; it "arrives without traveling," as the retro-heads the Three O'Clock put it. Unlike Bauhaus, Love and Rockets aren't trying to follow in the footsteps of the surrealists, dadaists or any other heady literary movements that Peter Murphy attempted to plug into through the edifice of rock 'n' roll.

Love and Rockets' influences might not be heady or cerebral or anything like that, but they work and they take you away to that place where cynicism is replaced with innocent pleasure.

—Charles Lieurance

Suicide, "Suicide" (Red Star Records)

Martin Rev and Alan Vega were the founding fathers of punk techno-pop, but if you think their group Suicide sounded anything like OMD or even Ultravox, you'd better move on to the sports page. Suicide has none of the calming orchestral effect of the former group or the dance-floor appeal of the latter. Suicide was pure assault, pure confrontation.

This album was made in 1977 but has been unavailable in the hinterlands until now.

Suicide's live shows were infamous, one part minimalist primal scream backed by monotonal percussive synthesizer and another part Alan Vega's unrelenting malignment of his audience.

Despite the horrific intent of Suicide, this album manages an amazing versatility of moods. The centerpiece is an epic horror story called "Frankie Teardrop" that's all the more ominous because the most terrifying elements of the tale are not communicated through lyrics but through Vega's tormented screams and subtle changes in synthesizer textures. This is a song to rival the Doors' "The End" and Dream Syndicate's "Halloween" among songs illustrative of music's ability to frighten and vivify.

Suicide also manages the flip side of this effect in the pained tenderness of "Cheree" and "Girl."

This album now seems available in almost every record store with an import rack. The glimpse into Rev and Vega's personal vision is not altogether pleasant, it is, in some cases, hellish, but for those who find some reward in such clearly passionate confession and trial, Suicide is without peer.

—Charles Lieurance

Heart Answers



WHAT IS AN ECG (EKG)?

ECG (EKG) is an abbreviation for an electrocardiogram, which is a graphic record of the electric currents generated by the heart. By reading the graph a doctor can determine several facts about the heart such as the heart rate, the heart's rhythm, whether the heart muscle is receiving enough blood, and whether there is an enlargement of any of the heart's four chambers. Contact your local American Heart Association for more information.



Pryor not critical for viewing laughs

By Kevin Cowan
Staff Reviewer

It seems to be the age of the multi-narrative, comedy-drama, hero-with-a-sense-of-humor film. "Critical Condition" is no exception.

Movie Review

Richard Pryor plays his usual character. A normal guy who is trying to make a living gets involved in a frame job, runs amok for an hour, then at the end comes up smelling like a rose. The only difference is Pryor's lack of energy. In the past, Pryor's characters have produced a sizable amount of rhetorical and comical energy, but not in this film.

The film moves, after a short while, from a sleazy sex shop to an isolated long island hospital. Pryor plays a semi-honest entrepreneur/communist who is forced to work with a loan shark, then busted — framed — and taken to jail. Next Pryor is sent to a psychiatric ward for "testing."

Pryor then gets dumped into one of the most overused scenarios ever put on film. Pryor impersonates a doctor. I get so tired of seeing phony doctors parade around spouting gibberish, and other "professionals" who are in contact with them actually believe the babbling idiots. The average doctor-impersonator, if he could steal the gowns (don't they

ever lock doors in hospitals?), would get into an emergency room and last five minutes before making a complete fool of himself, then out on his proverbial ear.

Despite some of the failed comedy, several of the supporting actors keep the film from floundering constantly. Garrett Morris (of Saturday Night Live fame) plays a "Helicopter Junkie," a methadone addict wanting his drugs. The whole hospital is stranded by a hurricane, and the hospital requires help from Morris and his clan of heavy drug users. Randall "Tex" Cobb also lends some of the comical attributes of the film. His strong-arm approach to comedy pummels the narrative out of boredom.

But what about all those scampering subplots? "Critical Condition" tried about four, and seems to have attempted too many. There are numerous bits and pieces of tangents and irrelevant story lines that at one point, completely contradict each other. The film brings these plots together in the end only to produce a fizzle.

In a nutshell, the film is a somewhat amusing, low-energy film with some good cinematography and not enough continuity. Maybe worth a matinee.

"Critical Condition" is showing at the East Park Plaza. Showings are daily at 5:40, 7:40 and 9:40 p.m.

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