

'Albedo,' 'Thieves World' excellent science fiction, fantasy

By Scott Wesely
Staff Columnist

"Albedo Anthropomorphics 8," Stephen Gallaci (Thoughts & Images)

Most black-and-white comics on the market stink. Bad art, sophomoric stories and vague attempts at parody kill their chances for success and harm the industry as a whole. That's why it's great when you find one that far exceeds your expectations. "Albedo" looks, on the outside, to be another "funny-animal" book, but as you begin to read you realize that no matter how 'aminalesquely' the artist is rendering the characters, the book ain't about funny animals.

That's where the "anthropomorphics" comes in. Writer-artist Stephen Gallaci writes a story about

Erma Felna of the EDF (a space confederacy trying to administer a colony taken by force), the local politics, a resistance movement and all the activities of life you'd expect of humans in similar situations. He's writing a straight science-fiction story about animals in a comic book and passing it off — on the surface, again — as a funny-animal book!

The backgrounds and characters look right, in a sketchy, believable way, and everything is shaded with watercolor effects, creating a sense of the farcical nature of using animals to mirror humans. The different species of animals act about the same, denying any racial difference, and the B&W nature of the book itself plays merry hell with any humor the reader is expecting. The reader gets a sense that this could

happen in a human context as well.

The backup story is even stranger. It's about two impossibly alien "unchallenged masters of the aggressively inefficient overt business scam," and what happens when it looks like they're getting caught. The art here is also sketchy, but in a

because of the sheer expense of the thing and because they already own the story in prose form. But the (so far) four Thieves' World graphic novels don't have to worry about either. They're only \$3.95 each, and well worth it! Neither do they have a true "black" mark due to being B&W, since the first three have been reprinted in one colorized novel. The fourth hasn't, yet, but it is by far the best of them even without color.

When Tim Sale's art first fell into my hands, I thought he looked like just another new B&W artist of the dime-a-dozen variety. But Sale has obviously been learning a lot about what makes B&W such a powerful force in comics (possibly due to working on the color version and seeing the difference) and No. 4 of the series shows just how much. His sense of panel layout is unique and

fits the mood of the original series: a bit somber and slow-moving, but incredibly rich and deep in significance. Then there are the panels themselves. His perspective shots are unparalleled — the dark corners seem oppressive but familiar, the meadows bright and artificially calm, the wharves authentic. His faces have gradually improved so that now they are quite distinct and expressive.

Thievery and Chaos

The story is set in the city of Sanctuary, on the southern coastline of the Rankan Empire. Sanctuary is a giant Hell's Kitchen of godplay, thievery and chaos, with political terrorist factions constantly fighting for control. Amid all this the everyday human dramas go on, creating a feeling of a great tapestry of life and death.

Comics Now

more natural, gritty style with rounded everything and goeey P.L.'s. Needs to be experienced.

Well worth it

"Thieves' World Graphics 4," adapted by Lynn Abbey and Tim Sale (Starblaze Graphics)

Generally, few Thieves' World enthusiasts would consider buying a Thieves' World graphic novel

Mayor's cabbage salad published; cookbook signing party Thursday

What do politicians think the public will swallow? What's really cooking at City Hall? What is the mayor stewing about? Why is Mayor Luedtke boiling?

The answers to these questions are not to be found in a behind-the-scenes news column, but in the newest publication from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, "The Mayors' Cookbook." Billed as "the ultimate regional cookbook," this compilation of culinary concoctions features more than 370 recipes from the nation's mayors, including Lincoln Mayor Roland Luedtke.

Luedtke's entry is Nebraska Cabbage Salad made from cabbage, onion, carrots, green pepper, sugar, vinegar, more sugar, mustard, celery seed, salt and salad oil. It's not a small dish; the

mayor includes enough ingredients to serve 16 to 18 people.

Included with Luedtke's recipe and those of the other political chefs are small narratives about their cities. In his narrative, Luedtke emphasizes the uniqueness of the state capitol and says "Lincoln is a friendly, hospitable city of over 180,000 people — a good-sized city with a small-town atmosphere. Lincoln's diversity and our emphasis on a high quality of life provide a strong base for future growth and development."

On Thursday, Mayor Luedtke will be at Waldenbooks in the Centrum from noon until 1 p.m. signing copies of "The Mayors' Cookbook." Mayors from other cities also will be signing copies of the

book in their cities that day to promote sales. Proceeds from the book will be used to support the Conference's Mayors' Leadership Institute program, an activity that provides for the continued education of all mayors.

The cookbook, which sells for \$14.95, features recipes from such well-known mayors as Ed Koch, Tom Bradley and Clint Eastwood. It also features a side dish of tongue-in-cheek humor from Cheyenne, Wyo., Mayor Don Erickson: Cheyenne Cream Can Supper. Mayor Erickson says it should be made in an "old cream can or a new galvanized large garbage can." He suggests substituting a fresh jackalope for sausage to "give the dish that unique country-western flavor."

Review Board

Eddy Clearwater, "Flimdoozie" (Rooster Blues Records)

Eddy Clearwater isn't content to simply let his blues music be someone's catharsis. He's more concerned with having a good time. Anyone who caught Clearwater a few weeks ago at the Zoo Bar can attest to this. Clearwater grinned from ear to ear all night and danced around, often joining fans on the dance floor. Clearwater is just a fun performer and a great entertainer. And this attitude translates to his latest LP, "Flimdoozie," due in the record stores any week now.

"Flimdoozie" is nearly as much a rock'n'roll record as it is blues. "Do This Town Tonight," full of classic rock images and a killer sax by Chicago blower Abb Locke, picks up side one and sends the listener back to the '50s. My only complaint about this LP is that Locke isn't used that much. Abb backed-up Eddy at the Zoo last month and stole the limelight several times. Unfortunately, he only blows on one other track, the title song, another rocker in the Chuck Berry tradition.

Overall, this is a party album, but Clearwater still gets down and bluesy on the aching 7 1/2 minute "Black Night — Falling Down Heavy," with a little help from his pal Otis Rush, who lays down some weeping solos on the guitar. Rush jams on five songs on "Flimdoozie." The two lefties complement each other well. Rush is smooth, while Clearwater is sometimes quirky. Harmonica is provided by Sugar Blue on two tracks, "Sugar Baby" and "I.R.S. Man."

There tunes are pure blues and will certainly take you to the West Side of Chi-town. "Flimdoozie" leaves you wondering: Just what is this album? Blues or rock'n'roll? Well, it's the best of both.

—Stew Magnuson

Cellophane Ceiling, "The Beauty Of It All" (Main Vain)

This debut album by Omaha's feistiest rock'n'roll trio is nowhere near as fun or exciting as its live shows; still, it's a great collection of hard, nasty, intelligent songs.

Cellophane Ceiling's sound is characterized by a brutally propulsive rhythm section over John Wolf's feedback-heavy pneumatic guitar. What sets C.C. apart from the thrash horde is its subtle sense of texture. They're masters of the fine art of spicing up a song with synthesizers without ever losing their rock'n'roll edge. The best example of this sort of daring on "The Beauty Of It All" is the goofy honky-tonk piano line that slinks in and out of the song "Happiness."

C.C.'s songs are bitterly funny anthems to hopelessness and frustration — like Elvis Costello as played by Aerosmith. The best example of C.C.'s sense of "humor" on the album is "All F***** Up," a cover of Elvis Presley's "All Shook Up" with the words changed to make it a junkie's love song to his stash.

Inexplicably missing from the album is C.C.'s biggest hit, the excellent "Mommy's in Moscow." In its absence, the best track on the record is undoubtedly "Don't Play God," a shattered acoustic blues number that builds to a level of absolute hysteria that has only been equaled in acoustic rock by a few, very early Violent Femmes songs. The song is an open letter to the geriatric megalomaniac in Washington. It's a semi-coherent scream of rage that would certainly put the old maniac in his place, except, of course, he's not listening. And that's the whole point.

—Chris McCubbin

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