

Soldiers

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junior junkies. There aren't any super-genius teens — the writers just allow these teens to be relatively normal.

On the bad side, the writers have too many plot errors. For example, after the kidnapper has control of the school he lets the kids go outside and play all day in the courtyard. Get real — most kidnappers would probably keep the kids confined and hidden somewhere. Also, when the FBI finally decides to storm the school, they cut off the power and phone lines. When the kidnapper realizes this, he just insists that they turn them back on. Anyone with half a brain could see that the FBI is planning

something when they cut off your communications. How could a man so dumb not to see this be able to plan a successful takeover of an entire school?

Some of the attention to detail was also lacking. In one scene Tepper leaves a trail of wet clothing down a hallway leading to the kidnappers. When the kidnappers left the room, the clothes were gone. Oops. The film is filled with these sorts of little things.

But, the special effects in this film were exceptional. They were very realistic without being disgusting or gory. As tastefully as one can show someone being demolished by an Apache helicopter, they did it.

"Toy Soldiers" is playing at the Plaza 4 Theatres, 12th and P streets.

Stewart

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will consist of reused junk.

The only other songs worth bothering with on "Vagabond Heart" are "You Are Everything," a pleasant but not distinctive ballad, and "If Only," a slow song. The violin on "You are Everything" is particularly nice. Neither song has hit potential, but they're listenable.

Stewart teams up with Tina Turner on "It Takes Two" and with the Temptations on "The Motown Song."

Stewart rhapsodizes in the liner notes about the experience: "Thanks to Tina Turner and to the Temptations — how marvelous it is to vocalize with such luminaries." He dedicates the album to his father, who died last year, and to his wife.

Stewart also takes the opportunity

to complain on his liner notes. He says that "many foolish and hurtful things have been written about myself in the press over the years." He contends that most are "severely embroidered half-truths" and says some are "out-and-out lies." Still, he says, "I'm not complaining, just stating a fact." He chalks it up to the business he's in.

The most pathetic moment is when Stewart states that "those who scribble with crooked nib will have to one day answer to the great editor in the sky himself, and will be judged guilty of possessing twisted tongues and bent pencils."

Besides being overly melodramatic, the statement fails to realize a very important point: Some of the great editors in the sky might just be women.

Save your money on this album; do buy the cassette single for "Rhythm of My Heart."

Science-fiction novel recreates computers and world history

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Reporter

The Difference Engine
William Gibson and Bruce Sterling
Bantam Books (Spectra)

"How much better it is to be a Royal bastard than a philosopher in England at present. But a mighty change is at hand."
—Gibson and Sterling, "The Difference Engine"

"The Difference Engine" represents an enigma both to history and to the reader — a "what-if" scenario in the best science-fiction tradition and a radical departure from the style of previous works by the two authors.

William Gibson broke into sci-fi circles with characteristic cyberpunk flash when his first novel, *Neuromancer*, won sci-fi's triple crown — a Hugo award, a Nebula award and a Philip K. Dick award.

Gibson's name is fused with that of Bruce Sterling as co-creator of the hard-hitting prose of cyberpunk that featured dismal worlds full of people directly interfacing with computers — the "new wave" that turned sci-fi on its head.

Sterling himself has authored several cyberpunk works of his own, as well as a short story written with Gibson.

Now, in their first collaborative novel, Gibson and Sterling have departed from the cyberpunk style that has characterized their work so far.

The pair has moved from a gloomy world of computers and societal decline to a Victorian London quite different from the one familiar to readers of Dickens.

The crucial difference stems from the development and widespread



Courtesy of Bantam

Bruce Sterling (left) and William Gibson, authors of "The Difference Engine."

use of the Analytical Engine postulated by Charles Babbage in the 1830s.

Babbage was limited by the technology of his day and thus only was able to produce a small model of the steam-driven precursor to the modern computer that he envisioned.

In Gibson and Sterling's London, Babbage was able to produce his machine, and the entire course of English and world history subsequently was changed.

This is no "what if Hitler had won the war?" business; Gibson and Sterling carefully have recreated and slightly altered the Lon-

don of the times, reflecting the changes initiated by the presence of the Analytical Machine more than a century before computers became widespread.

More importantly, the book's emphasis is upon the lives of the characters rather than technological advances. For all the changes brought by the early advent of computerlike technology, the intrigues of individual lives remain much the same.

The familiar themes all can be found in this work: love, sex, ambition, progress, regression,

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