

Little Village natives fuse talent, technology

Reviews



**"Little Village"
Little Village
Reprise Records**

Ry Cooder, Jim Keltner, Nick Lowe and John Hiatt were never really stars of the music industry. They just sort of became legends.

Throughout the 1970s, Lowe was cutting his teeth in Dave Edmunds' group Rockpile. Hiatt enjoyed a critically acclaimed solo career with his band, the Goners. Through solo albums, Cooder evolved as a master blues guitarist. Keltner just let the stars come to him when he needed a

pro behind the trap set.

The four men had played together only once, on Hiatt's acclaimed 1987 release, "Bring the Family." From that album, it was evident that they would be fools not to join forces again.

Now the four have converged to jam under the moniker Little Village. This news brings anticipation, as Little Village could be called a supergroup in the same vein as the Traveling Wilburys.

While interest in the Wilburys came from the major celebrities involved, Little Village draws attention because the four men are master musicians, thinking and playing like a real band. "Little Village" already is a contender for album of the year.

Most of the album's intrigue comes from its mixture of modern technology and genuine musical talent.

"Solar Sex Panel," an outtake from the 1987 sessions, sets the album's pace with its propulsive beat and Cooder guitar snarl. Hiatt chimes in with a perfect melody line, and the results are seamless.

Throughout the album, Keltner relies on varied percussion techniques, keeping the tunes rooted in godlike grooves. The humble, simple track he lays down on "Inside Job" allows the others to form a slow burner dripping with old-time soul.

The album even has a pop gem — a radio-friendly jewel the guys deserve. "Don't Go Away Mad" is as

silly and wondrous as simple pop can get, and the mixture of warm keyboards and Hiatt's falsetto crooning with scratching guitar provides a danceable sound not heard often enough.

Music lacks the words to describe the sounds made by Little Village, since it's been so long since such sounds have been on radio. Bluesy rock, country grunge, rough pop: All you need to know is that this is real rock, delivered by people who should know what that's all about.

All four men tower in character, grace, talent and finesse as they teach those young whippersnappers of today where their music came from.

—Paul Winner



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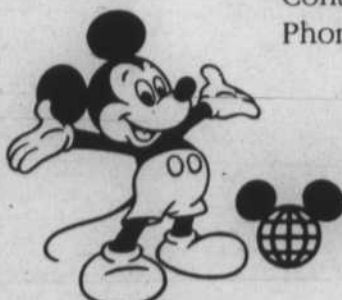
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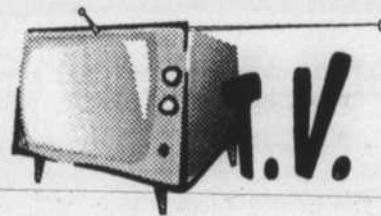
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Courtesy of Hanna-Barbera

The characters of CBS's new comedy "Fish Police" are, clockwise from left: Mussels Marinara, Pearl, Inspector Gil, Angel, Calamari and Crabby.

Show to sink, swim based on pun pool



By Steve Pearson
Staff Reporter

"Fish Police," the CBS entry in the prime-time cartoon race, swam onto the airwaves with a colorful splash Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The show borrows its concept from a British comic book of the same name. The comic was considered too dark for American television, so the tone has been lightened with colorful characters and aquatic humor.

Producers describe the result as "fish noir." Capturing the feel of the 1940s, "Fish Police" pays homage to "The Godfather" and "Dragnet."

In the premiere episode, "The Shell Game," Fish City's greatest detective, Inspector Gil (John Ritter), intervenes when "fin-fatale" Angel Jones (JoBeth Williams) is framed for a murder she didn't commit.

Just as Gil expected, Fish City's most evil citizen, Calamari the squid (Hector Elizondo), was behind the plot with the help of his slimy henchmen, Sharkster the lawyer (Tim Curry) and Mussels Marinara the bodyguard (Frank Welker).

Other notable characters include Pearl (Megan Mullally), who pines for Gil; Catfish (Robert Guillaume), the police force's master of disguise; the "dorsal-kissing go-fer" Tad (Charlie Schlatter); Chief Abalone (Ed Asner); and Mayor Cod (Jonathan Winters).

The animation is truly superb. Lush backgrounds and an incredible underwater effect are joined by Hanna-Barbera's cast of memorable characters.

It is obvious that the animators

have given special attention to how the characters move. Each character has a distinctive swim, from Calamari's slither to Angel's strut. And the characters are cleverly drawn, down to the smallest detail — Gil carries a living badge, a starfish named Sandy.

The all-star cast adds to the fun of "Fish Police." Ritter provides a "just-the-facts-ma'am" persona for Gil. And Williams provides a wonderfully sultry voice for her Jessica Rabbit of the Deep. But the star of the celebrity voices is Guillaume, who gives Catfish a sly, witty voice befitting a master of disguise.

Award-winning composer Jack Horner of "An American Tail," "Field of Dreams" and "Glory" provides a vibrant score worthy of a feature film.

The show relies on fish puns and double meanings for most of its humor. The show's success ultimately will depend on whether its creative force can consistently tap into such a limited "joke pool."

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The production team edits the film to get an idea of how the program should be assembled, Geyer said. This is the "rough cut."

The rough cut is followed by a "fine cut," which involves fine tuning but no major changes to the program, Geyer said.

In post-production, he said, the program is "conformed," which is an expensive editing process done on a machine that, to an outsider, would cost about \$300 an hour to rent.

Finally the audio, music and sound

effects are added to the film. These additions are called "sweetening," Geyer said.

From start to finish, he said, a production takes about four months of 40- to 50-hour weeks to complete.

"I wish I could work a 40- or 50-hour week," Geyer said. "Most of them are more like 60 or 70 hours."

"Director's Choice" will air sometime next fall, he said. The program follows the work of six artists and the three museum directors who show their work.

Martha Horvay, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln associate professor of art, is one of the featured artists.

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