



Courtesy of Beggars Banquet

Peter Murphy recently released a new LP titled "Holy Smoke" on the Beggars Banquet label.

Gloomy album echoes sounds of artist's former Bauhaus

Reviews



"Holy Smoke"
Peter Murphy
Beggars Banquet

Every once in a while, this ugly world will send you scurrying to your stereo for a little escapism, something even darker than your immediate surroundings. When this destructive need becomes unbearable, thank God for artists like Peter Murphy. Since parting ways with goth-rock forerunner Bauhaus, the prince of darkness has recorded one compelling album after another.

His last release, 1990's "Deep," was, well, deep. Part dance-pop, part Iggy Pop, "Deep" provided a dreamy narrative on the varying joys and sorrows of love, and how it "cuts you up." Yet, however dreary or self-defeating his thoughts tend to be, Murphy's sensuous baritone always brings a kind of urgency to it all.

With his latest release, "Holy Smoke," Murphy has crafted more thoughtful tunes in the spirit of his earliest influences — David Bowie, Pere Ubu and Iggy Pop.

The nine tracks that make up the new LP are closer thematically to 1988's "Love Hysteria" than to "Deep." "Smoke" is gloomier, but equally absorbing. The progression seems like a natural one for the singer/songwriter.

Using sparse instrumentation from Murphy's band, the Hundred Men, and multi-tracking the vocals for added weight, "Smoke" is bare-bones pop. Eddie Branch's gentle bass thumps and a soft synthesizer wash often are the only discernible sounds aside from Murphy's voice.

Lyrical, his aspirations are less grand, too. "Health is all I'm asking for," he announces on the opening cut, "Keep Me From Harm." Of course, by album's end he has asked for much more.

He even pokes fun at his own place as a post-punk crooner on "Kill the Hate," intentionally crack-

ing his voice to give the song the proper absurdity.

Love and obsession are major players throughout "Smoke." For Murphy, the artist, love is a catch-22: It both inspires him and drives him to distraction, leaving him a bit helpless. "Ah can't write now/wanna phone you" he laments on "You're So Close," a tune reminiscent of Bauhaus's "Swing the Heartache" LP.

Murphy always has had a penchant for double-entendres, turning phrases that are as provocative as they are poetic. Forget the headlines, for him, sex is INHERENTLY dangerous.

He first voiced this idea on "Deep's" "Deep Ocean," and it's echoed here on "The Sweetest Drop": "Let's scream out like the sea/Pull me warm and slender," Murphy wails to guitarist Peter Bonas's wah-wah feeds.

One drawback to "Holy Smoke" is that about half of the tracks are merely settings for Murphy's voice,

See MURPHY on 10

Goodman bats 1.000 in realistic portrayal of famed ball player



"The Babe"



By Gerry Beltz
Staff Reporter

You don't need to be a baseball fan to enjoy "The Babe" (Plaza 4, Edgewood 3).

Although Babe Ruth is legendary for his record-breaking home runs, in "The Babe" we see that his hardest victories and defeats were with himself.

John Goodman ("Always," "Barton Fink") portrays George Herman "Babe" Ruth, a man driven by the cheer of the crowd, a life of wine, women and song, and the desire to keep everyone in the world happy — no matter what.

Not only is the audience taken through the Babe's infamous baseball career, it also is drawn into his emotional highs and lows, emotions he experienced before and during that career. From the emotion-scarring day in 1902 when his father abandoned him at a Catholic reform school to his final game with the Atlanta Braves in 1935, the audience is with him every step of the way.

Trini Alvarado ("Mrs. Soffel") plays Ruth's first wife Helen, a woman whose shy and withdrawn personality is completely opposite that of Babe's. Helen is drawn to Babe by his childlike innocence and playfulness. Alvarado is stunning to watch in this picture, showing every subtlety of frustration and anger that her charac-

ter suffers during her turbulent marriage to Babe Ruth.

Ruth's second wife Claire is played by Kelly McGillis ("Witness," "Top Gun"), but her character is never fully developed. McGillis does well with what her character does have, portraying the woman who wants only the best for "her Babe Ruth."

The movie, however, belongs to Goodman. In him, every facet of Babe Ruth comes alive on the screen. He's a man scarred by the 17 years spent in a reform school, events that followed and shaped him for the rest of his life.

Wherever Ruth goes, it is something or someone vs. the image and ego of Babe Ruth, whether it be a manager of a baseball team or Ruth's own common sense.

Goodman handles everything wonderfully. We see his happiness when he hits his first home run at the reform school and the joy he feels being around the children who love him. To Babe Ruth, the world is "one giant playground," and he tries to go through it as quickly as possible.

We also see the bad side of Babe Ruth, from his attacking a taunting fan during a slump, to his weeping relapse into childhood traumas.

Another trait of Babe's — his determination and dedication to the game of baseball — is brought out well by Goodman in this picture. His infamous pointing to where he would knock the ball out of the park (a high point in "Major League," another great baseball-oriented flick), is an exceptionally heart-warming portion of "The Babe."

Directed by Arthur Hiller ("Teachers," "The Lonely Guy"), "The Babe" also captures the era magnificently with music (by Elmer Bernstein), costumes and settings appropriate to the period.

Rated PG for a smidgen of foul language. We're talking good stuff here. Check it out.

American impressionists capture Sheldon spotlight

From Staff Reports

"Capturing the Light: American Impressionism" will open today at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

The exhibition features 46 works by such American Impressionist painters as Robert Henri, who was instrumental in creating a distinctively American approach to Impressionism, and Ernest Lawson of the Ashcan School.

Also included in the exhibit are works by Robert Gilder of Nebraska and Birger Sandzen of Kansas.

Originally a French phenomenon pioneered by Monet, Degas and Renoir, Impressionism was an attempt, among

other things, to capture the qualities and play of light; hence the exhibit's title.

The paintings to be shown are taken from private collections and the Sheldon's own permanent collection of American art. The exhibition has just returned from a recent mini-tour. The show was presented at the Flint Art Institute in Michigan and in Vero Beach, Florida.

"Capturing the Light" is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, which is available at the gallery's gift shop. Free tours of the exhibit will be offered and a number of lectures will also be presented.

Finding palatable wine a trial, error process

By Chris Burchard
Staff Reporter

A few months ago, I wrote an article about what to do when a restaurant server brings a bottle of wine to your table. Within a week or so after the article, I was bombarded by people saying things like, "Great, Chris, you told us how to order wine, but you forgot to tell us which kind to get in the first place." So in answer to to all the questions, I give you what I call my "Wine Quickie," a short lesson in wine and what to order at a restaurant.

Wine has been around for more than 3,000 years, and I hear it keeps getting better all the time. If you avoid wine, you're denying your-

self one of the three great pleasures of life: good food, good wine and another thing.

First, we need to quickly discuss grapes. There are thousands of different varieties of the grape, but only about 50 are suitable for making fine wines. The two scoops of raisins in your breakfast cereal are not, I can assure you, of the fine-wine kind.

The name of the grape used in making a wine often lends itself to the wine's name. If you can handle my phonetics, I'll give you an example: Chardonnay (shard-o-nay) wine is made from the Chardonnay grape. See, learning about wine isn't brain surgery.

With that over, we'll start with three basic categories of wine: white, red and blush.

Blush wines, also called pink or rosé wines,

are probably the most popular wines in America now. That's because they're sweet, fruity and easy to drink. If you don't like wine, or worse, don't think you will and have never tried it, start with a blush.

White Zinfandel is the current king of the blush world. At the restaurant where I wait tables, I get more orders for this wine than any other. First of all, White Zinfandel is not a white wine. It's pink. It comes from a red grape (the Zinfandel) that's been partially skinned. The wine itself is, if it's a good one, refreshing, sweet and very fruity (as in berries). If you want something akin to a wine cooler, this is it sans the fizz.

There are other blush wines, but White Zinfandels are a good kind to start with, be-

See WINE on 10