

New album to be different, Millions say



By Jill O'Brien
Senior Reporter

Bad news for fans of The Millions, a local-gone-national alternative-edged band. . .

"Tonight, Duffy's is our last live show for a while," guitarist Harry Dingman III said.

But fans need not worry: The good news is that — after tonight — vocalist Lori Allison, drummer Greg Hill, bassist Marty Amsler and Dingman begin pre-production work on The Millions' second album. It is to be released this October, two years after their debut album, "M is for Millions."

This album will be completely different, according to Dingman. Not only will the new album be recorded in top-notch local studios, The Millions will be on a different label, he said.

Recently, The Millions signed a two-album contract with Dream Circle, a label in Hamburg, Germany.

"They're a really big independent label and have one of the largest distributions in Europe and they have a subsidiary label in Japan," Dingman said.

"Not only will we have great access through Europe, we'll have another label working for us in Japan. . ."

A label they hope will work out better than the SMASH label did, he said.

After SMASH, a subsidiary label of Polygram, released "M is for Millions," it became one of the top 20 college albums. . .

"We thought things were going well, we were touring, we were doing everything we

should and SMASH was doing everything they could," Dingman said. "But Polygram just didn't take over and start promoting like they said they were going to do. We realized then that maybe Polygram wasn't the right label for us."

So how did The Millions end up with a German contract in hand?

"What happened was I had some good friends in Germany," Dingman said. "I sent them the album and they sent it out to some local magazines."

"A writer saw the review and he got the album and really liked it and put it in a magazine equivalent to Spin or something in Germany — more heavy-metal oriented," he said.

"So we had these huge reviews of our album and interviews with us right next to Pearl Jam and AC/DC. It was strange."

Amsler agreed.

"You just never know where it's going to come from," Amsler said. "We got interest from three labels just from that one review."

Olly Burgslath, president of Dream Circle, told The Millions he liked their demos and didn't want to change anything, Dingman said. Burgslath's attitude influenced The Millions to go with Dream Circle.

When SMASH was in control, The Millions didn't have as much say as they would have liked in producing their first record, Dingman said.

"With Dream Circle, we'll have full artistic control," he said. "Doing an album our way is going to be a lot better for us."

Amsler is equally excited to be back in control.

"The way we recorded our last album, we did half of it in Canada and half of it in Chicago, and mixed the backup in Canada. It seemed like more of a distraction," Amsler said.



Photo courtesy of Ted Casey Schlaebitz. Photo montage, DN

The Millions will play at Duffy's tonight.

"We feel a lot more comfortable in our hometown and I'm hoping that will come through on an album," he said.

"What's cool about this deal is we'll record the album but own the tape," Dingman said.

"Since we own the rights to it in America," Amsler said, "we'll be talking to some companies who are interested in putting it out here."

Eventually, The Millions hope to sign with an American label, Dingman said.

"When a big label signs a band, they might have seen them live a couple of times or heard a rough demo and they're going to put up all this

money, hoping to get an album what they think will sell," Amsler said.

"We'll have a finished album in our hands," he said. "There'll be no guesswork or gamble; it's all done. I think that puts us in a little better position."

Tonight The Millions, along with the Yard Apes, play two shows, 7:30 and 10:30 at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St.

Because The Millions encourage fans to support the Food Bank, tickets will be a dollar off if fans bring a can of food as a donation — otherwise, tickets are \$5.

Film combines laughter, reality

'Jack the Bear'



Occasionally, Hollywood turns out a picture that blends the harshness of reality with laughter, tears and tenderness. Sometimes it works, most times it doesn't.

"Jack the Bear" (Cinema Twin, 13th and P streets) is one movie that works. And even though it is set in 1972 Oakland, Calif., it could be now, anywhere in America.

Based on the novel by Dan McCall, it's a movie about monsters — not the ones under the bed, but the ones inside of us, the ones we know as fear. It's also the story of a young boy with an unusual life, growing up in a complicated world.

Robert J. Steinmiller Jr. is 12-year-old Jack, a bright, responsible child who sometimes plays parent to both himself and 3-year-old Dylan (Miko Hughes) as well as his father (Danny DeVito). It is through his eyes the story is told.

DeVito is John Leary, a late-night horror show host trying to raise his sons after the death of his wife. He's an unusual parent — aside from his unusual job, he also loves to laugh, and the neighborhood kids love him.

Norman (Gary Sinise) walks with a cane, washes his car everyday and is the object of rumor, ridicule and fear from all the neighborhood kids.

But he becomes the real villain of the movie.



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Robert J. Steinmiller, Miko Hughes and Danny DeVito in "Jack the Bear."

acting out the kids' every nightmare. His neo-Nazi sympathies come to the forefront on Halloween, and provide the catalyst for the film.

This deeply moving film is filled with terrific performances. Young Steinmiller is superb as Jack, displaying a sensitivity usually found in more seasoned actors. Sinise's Norman is frightening, but his performance gives hints of the sadness behind this twisted, wounded man.

— Anne Steyer

Kid steals show from Reynolds

'Cop and a Half'



In Burt Reynolds' latest film, "Cop and a Half" (Edgewood 3, 56th and Highway 2, and Plaza 4, 201 N. 12th St.), don't sweat it if you don't think he's funny or you're not a fan.

His role could've been played by anybody. It's the little kid that steals the show.

Cute-kid-of-the-week Norman D. Golden II plays Devon, an 8 year old that more than anything else wants to be a cop so he won't get pushed around by the school bullies.

He finds his perfect role model in Nick McKenna (Reynolds), a cop that chases down (and apprehends) his suspects with his car (shades of "Midnight Run").

One night, Devon sees Vinnie (Ray Sharkey), a gangster who fancies himself as a '50s rock-

and-roll singer, doing a rub-out on a squealer, and Devon uses his information to strike a deal with the police.

In exchange for the plate number and description of the crooks, he wants to ride with McKenna (who hates children) and have all the authority a cop has.

It's pretty obvious how the plot will develop and end, but it's how it gets there that makes the film worth it.

You get to see all those things that kids have always wanted to do — giving a speeding ticket to the school principal, handcuffing the bullies together, stuff like that.

Vinnie's sidekicks are a hoot as well, and make the Three Stooges look like Mensa candidates.

Anyone that has liked episodes of "Miami Vice" or any other police-related TV show ("COPS" doesn't count) will like this flick.

— Gerry Beltz

Actors don't ignite sparks in lukewarm new comedy



Courtesy of Hollywood Pictures

Melanie Griffith and John Goodman in "Born Yesterday."

'Born Yesterday'



"Born Yesterday" (Douglas 3, 13th and P streets) straddles the line between humor and stupidity.

Sometimes it falls off. Both ways.

Melanie Griffith stars as Billie Dawn, a former Las Vegas showgirl turned paramour of business mogul Harry Brock (John Goodman). Harry brings her with him to Washington, but finds that her social skills are sadly lacking.

He hires investigative reporter Paul Verrall (Don Johnson) to "smarten" her up; partly to do just that, and partly to get Verrall off his back.

Harry doesn't get Verrall off his back; instead, he gives Billie more power, because through Verrall, she learns to question and yearns to know. It also leads her into a

romance with Verrall.

Here comes the trouble: Griffith and Johnson are a couple in real life, so it could be supposed that there would be obvious sparks between them. There aren't, at least not ones that would light anything on fire.

Johnson is good, but he doesn't have much to do. Goodman is hard-hitting as the heavy and shows he still has much untapped potential.

Griffith has shown before, specifically in "Working Girl," that she can act. But she has some difficulty making Billie naive rather than stupid. Not all this is her fault, however, as some of the dialogue lacks any semblance of intelligence.

"Born Yesterday" does have some genuinely funny moments. But the best parts about this lukewarm comedy comes from the fun it pokes at Washington social politics — the nation's capitol provides plenty of material for humor.

— Anne Steyer