

Kombat

Continued from Page 9

"People are old enough to realize that you can't really go out and pull someone's head off," he said.

It might not be that simple, though. According to Gregg Wright, an associate research professor at the Center for Children, Family and Law at UNL, video game violence should not be dismissed without examination.

"It is a serious concern," he said. "The violence in video games can be desensitizing to violence elsewhere in the world."

Wright said video game violence has not been researched enough to determine the full effect it has upon society.

He said video games were a potential problem.

Aside from the violence controversy is the issue of whether video games can become addictive.

Some students become so involved with the game, it affects their studies, Wright said.

Wright said he saw this trend mainly among freshman. He said older students realize they must concentrate time to improving their grade point averages.

Collett said, "Some college students' studies have fallen by the wayside. I mean, I love my games, but I realize there is a time for gaming and a time for studying."

Nelson said he played whenever he had the opportunity. He said the

time he consumed playing video games did affect his time left for studying, but it was not a serious addiction.

Some of the problems with video games and violence have been addressed by the games' distributors.

Similar to record labeling, Sega has adopted a ratings policy on all of its video games. The ratings are based on "age appropriateness" and content issues.

— " " —
The age group the game is targeted at is mainly college students — and we like violence. In our own fantasy world we like seeing someone's head pulled off.

— Collett sales associate, Kay-Bee Toys

Sega has three ratings levels, GA for general audiences, MA-13 for mature audiences with parental discretion advised, and MA-17 not appropriate for minors.

Collett said Mortal Kombat carried a MA-13 rating. The rating will serve as a warning for those who want to avoid the excessive violence. He said it also served as a valuable parental guide.

A consumer service representative for Nintendo Entertainment Systems

of America said the company did not agree with Sega's policy of labeling.

"We don't believe in labeling. We believe video games should be (suitable) for everyone to see," she said.

"If Sega makes their video games so horrid that they have to label them, then they discriminate against the younger kids. They should tone it down and it would be just as good without the minor technicalities."

A Sega of America spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

Nelson said he also disagreed with the labeling policy.

"People should establish that it is just a game and is not real life. There shouldn't be any need for labels," he said.

He said parents should be the ones who decide what their children play.

Collett said one mother forced her child to return Mortal Kombat to the store because she was offended by the violence the code could release.

"She said we shouldn't be selling the game to children his age," he said. "He was even 13, but she objected to it. She was really upset video games were so violent."

Collett said the controversy of eliminating video game violence has been blown out of proportion.

"People get all upset over nothing," he said.

The battle over violence is far from over — and it looks as if it might heat up even more. Midway plans to ship a new and possibly bloodier Mortal Kombat II to arcades before Christmas.

Loaf

Continued from Page 9

Cool stuff is sprinkled throughout the rest of the album, too.

One highlight is "Objects in the Rear View Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are," a song about being haunted in the present by past tragedies. The metaphor in the song works well: "And if life is just a highway/then the soul is just a car/and objects in the rear view mirror may appear closer than they are."

Also, Steinman makes things interesting when he does the neurotic monologue on "Wasted Youth," a story about a guy who whacks out and smashes his guitar against floors and motorcycles and varsity cheerleaders. Despite the political incorrectness of it all, it just makes you giggle.

Wow. It's the '90s, Meat Loaf has a new album, we're all in college, and people are taking more baths than usual. Things couldn't be more super.

—Mike Lewis

"Blue Buddha" is easily the best song offered, even if it does sound a bit like the Happy Mondays.

"Dementia 66" is also a cut above the rest, even if it was used in the Sharon Stone film, "Sliver."

On "13 Above the Night," new member Trash K. and Otto are added on guitars and percussion respectively. However, the two are largely drowned out by samples and machines.

That's too bad. Thrill Kill Kult is at its best when the gadgets are turned down.

—Bryce Glenn



Courtesy Tommy Boy

"Buhloone Mind State" De La Soul Tommy Boy

"I am Posdnuos. I be the new generation."

Summed up, "Buhloone Mind State" is De La Soul's latest emergence from yet another unknown path, only to recount the listener with more stories using further undiscovered vernacular.

Basically, it is the high quality work that everyone has come to expect from De La Soul.

De La's biggest deviation is the absence of skits between songs. The skits helped to maintain the themes of their two previous albums.

The four skits that are included are worth a listen, with antics ranging from the chatter of Japanese rappers SPD and Takagi Kan to Prince Paul airing his anger over his alleged misrepresentation in "The Source" magazine.

The rest of the album is pure De La magic.

"I am I be" is a track of self-realization accompanied by proclamations of being from more Native Tongues pals than a person can count on one hand. The instrumental version, "I be blowin'" is a phenomenal horn solo by Maseo Parker.

The real meat of the album emerges in these eleven tracks as Pos and Dove's skills are highlighted masterfully.

Old school styles are heard on tracks like "Area" and "Ego Trippin'," backed by samples and hazy horns from the guy's own private school.

They can funk as well, as showcased in "En Focus" and the first single released, "Breakadawn."

Several guest appearances are sprinkled throughout the album. Guru shows up with a jazzy flute dropping "Patti Dooke," while Biz Markie gets stupid on "Stone Age."

The album's most amazing element is the Native Tongues' newest member Shortie No Mass. This 4-foot-11-inch sister from Philly blends her smooth flow with De La throughout the album. She is showcased properly on the track "In the Woods."

De La Soul's excellence continues to set the standard in the rap industry — an industry they will continue to thrive in for a long time to come.

—Greg Schick



Courtesy Interscope Records

"13 Above the Night" My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult Interscope Records

If you like the alternative dance scene and boogeying under fluorescent lights to a monotonous, pounding, techno-beat, you'll like "13 Above the Night," the fourth full-length release from My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult.

But even if you don't like to dance, this disc may have something to offer you.

"13 Above the Night" is Thrill Kill Kult's first effort since their song "Sex on Wheelz" was used in the 1992 animated film "Cool World." It's kind of industrial, and it has a couple of genuinely good songs.

However, most of the album is over-synthesized or just plain boring.

Groovie Mann and Buzz McCoy, who formed Thrill Kill Kult in 1987 and remain the core members of the group, rely too much on techno grooves and beats, often at the expense of melody.

They're at their worst in "Delicate Terror" and "Final Blindness," two songs begging for ridicule because of their silly sound effects.

Fans who like Thrill Kill Kult's habit of oversaturating their music with samples of old movies, interviews, and newscasts won't be disappointed. All 13 songs open with a sampled line and then repeat it over and over and over.

The samples are so widespread that listeners may end up associating songs with the content of the samples rather than the titles.

For instance, "China de Sade" becomes "I'm Doing It Because I'm Angry; I'm Doing It to Feel the Pain," and "Electrical Soul Wish" becomes "I've Always Fought Against Evil, and I've Always Won."

But "13 Above the Night" has its good moments too.

The disc starts out strong with "Velvet Edge," a dark song with a strong baseline.

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