

## Energetic Dead Milkmen rouse, punish crowd

### Concert review

There's no crying over spilled milk. The Dead Milkmen provided a big reality check for the crowd gathered at the Ranch Bowl on Monday night. The entire concert was a twisted public service message dragged over 90 minutes of really eclectic music.

To prove their reality, the band was mingling with the crowd before the concert. Guitarist and vocalist

Butterfly Fairweather lingered in the back, telling the story of the band's near fiasco in Yugoslavia.

After chastising Pearl Jam and their loyal fans, lead singer and keyboardist Rodney "Anonymous" said he had to punish the crowd for flocking after flaky bands such as the Spin Doctors.

"Well, Ethel, sell the bowlin' ball, we need tickets to the Spin Doctors!" he screamed during the encore.

Rodney's method of torture was reading passages from his "favorite" book, a journal by Suzanne Sommers. Rodney proceeded to narrate some interesting parts from the book highlighting Sommers' anatomical challenges and triumphs.

Seeming irate, Rodney impersonated two of his other "most hated musicians," Bono and Frank Sinatra. He had them driving away in Sinatra's car, which was, ironically, a "Bitchin' Camaro," the Milkmen's most popular college-radio hit single.

Rodney looked like someone still recovering from a disco-fever/beatnik parentage, and the rest of his crew who all showed evidence of "traveling fatigue," especially bean-pole bassist 11070 (Dave Blood).

The Milkmen played a sporadic run-through of songs from their first album "Big Lizard in My Backyard," to their most recent "Not Richard, But Dick."

Placing the band in a category is virtually impossible. Although their performance and musical style was teetering on the edge of "modern-rock" alternative, they weren't.

From Rodney's harmonica solos and psychedelic keyboard manipulations, to Fairweather's almost cajun guitar style, The Dead Milkmen were alive with variety.

Rodney was very associated with his audience. At one point he took the initiative to bless his "disciples" with a rather vogue-ish sign of the cross.

A very caffeinated band and one most parents wouldn't invite over for dinner, The Dead Milkmen were so

down to Earth, they just may have reached the core.

As for the opening band, Possum Dixon, they sounded as if they spent most of the '70s locked in a basement listening to Velvet Underground. If Lou Reed and Kim Deal were to have an illegitimate child, he would be Possum Dixon's lead singer.

Aside from looking like anemic bleach boys, their musical and lyrical talent was impressive. The Velvet Underground must have helped.

Of course, touring with The Dead Milkmen couldn't hurt either.

— Paula Lavigne



Michael Keaton and Nicole Kidman star in the tear-jerker "My Life."

Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

## Beavis, Butt-Head break out of TV, enter bookstands



"This Book Sucks"  
Sam Johnson and Chris Marciel  
Pocket Books

The Butt-Head blitz begins. MTV's popular show, "Beavis and Butt-Head" has moved from television into other media markets — starting with the publishing world — with their first book, published by Pocket Books.

The book, appropriately titled, "This Book Sucks," is Beavis and Butt-Head's first stab at a market other than television.

The book offers a nearly flawless transition from television to the written word. Unlike many other popular shows that make the jump to paperback — "Wayne's World" and "Coneheads" to name two — "This Book Sucks" actually offers an extended vision of the animated duo.

The reader reads the semi-accurate theory that Beavis and Butt-Head are actually brothers. We even get to see journals and reports about Beavis and Butt-Head as they grew up.

Journal contributors include Mr. Buzzcut, a militant hygiene teacher, Mr. Van Driessen, the eternal hippie, and Stuart Stevenson, a perfect-mannered teenager who is desperately trying — and failing — to become a cool rebel like our heroes.

The book manages to capture some of the cartoon's realistic but satirical take on adolescence.

Whether you think Beavis and Butt-Head are just idiots who glorify senseless violence or you think the show is the boldest, most imaginative one on television, you have to face a terrifying reality: You know these characters.

They have populated suburban junior high and high schools for decades — long before the show ever aired.

There have always been students who were cast out by the popular cliques in school. They rebelled by wearing black t-shirts, listening to heavy metal and blowing things up. Their desire for destruction was only matched by their growing sex drives.

One great example of this satirical realism is their "instant band name chart," which allows

See **BUTT-HEAD** on 10

## Manipulative film delivers desired affects

Comical elements, Keaton add splash



"My Life"



"My Life" is a manipulative movie. The story, the direction, the music — they all manipulate the audience.

And that's annoying.

Unfortunately, for the most part, the manipulation works. The audience laughs,

and the audience cries. And it's certainly not because of the cardboard characters.

Michael Keaton is Bob Jones, a public relations specialist who finds he's afflicted with incurable cancer. His lovely, young wife — a terribly wooden Nicole Kidman — is pregnant with their first child.

When Bob finds he's going to die, he decides to make a videotape for his unborn child. Over the course of the movie, that one tape turns into many, many tapes. In order to explain to his child who he is, Bob must face his family and his past.

Not an easy task for a man who cut himself off from his blue-collar family in an attempt to make himself a better person.

When all traditional medicine fails, concerned wife Gail takes Bob to a Chinese doctor who attempts to help Bob release his anger, accept his faith and find peace. Another tough job for a guy like Bob.

Written and directed by "Ghost" creator Bruce Joel Rubin, "My Life" is one manipulative moment after another. Rubin

works tirelessly to wring a tear or a laugh out of virtually every scene. Just because he was successful writing "Ghost," he shouldn't think he can direct.

Keaton is terrific and does as much as he can with the little he is given, but he's forced to play opposite Kidman, who walks through her role. Every line is delivered with the same flat, lackluster tone — even the ones supposedly rife with passion or anger.

To its credit, the movie does have some nice comic elements, which is not a particularly easy thing to accomplish in a picture about dying. Also, Keaton's final scene was obviously written — and acted — by someone who had witnessed death by cancer. Keaton's acting was realistic enough to give chills.

But everything else in "My Life" is an exercise in audience manipulation. And being manipulated is one of the least satisfactory experiences for a movie goer — no one goes to the theater to get jerked around.

— Anne Steyer

## Guitarists go beyond unplugged

Thackery, Mooney release "Sideways"

Blues guitarists Jimmy Thackery and John Mooney departed from the usual acoustic album to give "unplugged" a new meaning with the re-release of "Sideways in Paradise."

During an interview, Thackery, who has entertained the local Zoo Bar crowd more than once with his hot-rod electric blues, said "Sideways" was actually released in 1985 with a wide range of assorted stringed instruments.

"Everybody's under the impres-

sion that it's some sort of new thing," Thackery said, "but the fact of the matter is I did this record way before any of these unplugged jerks even got the idea. I did it back in 1985 with John Mooney."

When Thackery was first approached to do an all-acoustic album, he asked Mooney to fly to Jamaica and collaborate with him on the record.

"Moon Man is one of the best acoustic blues guys as far as doing that Delta-blues stuff like Robert Johnson and Skip James. This guy is as authentic as it gets," Thackery said.

While Thackery's grinding bass vocals are distinctively heard on the album, especially on the slower-paced

cut, "I'll Come Running," the deep richness of Mooney's vocals dominate most of the songs.

Other songs like "Jamaican Mess Around," "Oh, Louise," the candid "Eliza" and the breathless six-minute "Jitterbug Swing" show what happens when cool Mississippi blues meet the transparent blues of the Caribbean waters.

The laid-back album took four days to cut, Thackery said.

"We had so much fun with it," he said. "We didn't just use guitars, we used some old 1925 Stella acoustic 12-strings; we used some 1920s Na-



Jimmy Thackery

Courtesy of Piedmont Talent

See **THACKERY** on 10