

Newvid

Continued from Page 9

the soundtrack is first-class as well. Violence, subject matter and language make "Above The Rim" a movie not to rent for the kids, but it's well worth seeing.

PICK OF THE WEEK — A movie focusing on competition in a pool hall, between two men and within a man's soul, "The Hustler" is an all-time classic.

Paul Newman stars as "Fast Eddie" Felson, a young, dynamite pool player who has come to Ames, Iowa, to challenge the legendary Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason) to see who really is the best.

Felson loses, but he begins on a long and painful journey that will bring him back as someone completely different.

All the performances are top-notch, and the pool-playing skills exhibited by Newman and Gleason are outstanding.



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MUSIC REVIEW

"Red Hot and Country" Various Artists Mercury Records Rating: B

Another death, another baby is born, another big-budget AIDS benefit album is produced. This disease-destroying compact disc, "Red Hot and Country," features supertwang artists like Johnny Cash, Billy Ray Cyrus and Mary Chapin Carpenter. Yee-hah!

Dolly Parton's cover of George Jones's "You Gotta Be My Baby" is the only song worth getting excited about on this album. What fun! Whatta gal! Cuteness may be the highest virtue after all.

Conversely, Brooks and Dunn's cover of "Folsom Prison Blues" is a filthy desecration of a Cash classic, capable of stinking up this entire album with its blasphemous stench. Hearing these two honky-tonk morons giddily declare "I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die — And when I hear that lonesome whistle, I hang my head and cry!" like they just won a rhinestone blow-up doll in a rodeo contest is enough to make one nauseous. Sorrow and regret make for a bad Nashville two-step, apparently.

The four-man band of Wilco, with Syd Straw in the wings, provides the best hope for the future of country music on this album. Their cover of "The T.B. Is Whipping Me," is both fully modern and authentic country at heart, detailing the sad death of country star Jimmie Rodgers. It could almost make you cry or something.

Most of the songs on this album are strictly "ehh." Johnny Cash's "Forever Young" is a real disappointment — badly produced

by Randy Scruggs, with lousy instrumentation and an unimpressive guitar solo that never ends.

Sammy Kershaw's "Fire and Rain" sours and molds the memory of a James Taylor classic. Nanci Griffith sings "If These Old Walls Could Speak" in the little-girl whispy of an Appalachian Smurf.

Willie Nelson and Carl Perkins do fun, revamped versions of their own songs.

"Red Hot and Country" presents a few country artists to enjoy and a lot of citified cheeseballs to avoid.

— Patrick Hambrecht



"Hot Trip to Heaven" Love and Rockets American Recordings Grade: C

In 1989, Love and Rockets scored its first and only hit with "So Alive." After listening to the group's new compact disc, "Hot Trip to Heaven," it is likely that the group will still be a one-hit wonder.

None of the songs on "Trip" are as catchy as L&R's older material. Most of the songs on the disc sound like a new-age meditation on bad

acid. Each of the 10 songs incorporates heavy use of keyboards, mystic chanting and spacy lyrics. What is missing from this release is the tightness the band used to have.

Take the first track, "Body and Soul." Clocking in at just under 15 minutes, the track nearly drowns itself in heavy techno production.

The rest of "Trip" fares a little better. The addition of Natacha Atlas for vocals fits perfectly with lead singer Daniel Ash's. Songs like "Eclipse" and "Be the Revolution" mark new directions for the band.

The band recorded most of the tracks on the disc within a period of eight days. Maybe that's why most of the disc sounds like such a mess. The band called this period of recording a "titanic burst of inspiration," according to a press release. What the band needs to do now is take that inspiration and shape it into a truly fluid and hypnotic listening experience.

"Trip" is only for the most dedicated Love and Rockets fan. The band is already set for another release in early 1995. Let's hope Love and Rockets doesn't "Trip" again.

— Sean McCarthy

"Universal Mother" Sinead O'Connor Chrysalis/EMI Records Grade: B

On Sinead O'Connor's fourth album, "Universal Mother," she packs all her anger and political frustrations into a lofty 14-song eulogy for lost childhood, and a prayer for a safer, more sensitive world.

Her efforts for universal motherhood among women, and her need to express the importance of pro-

tecting children from our 'cruel' world, turned this album into a lullaby that could put anyone at ease, or at least pull on their heartstrings a little.

Most of the songs are minimalistic in instrumentation and simple in their melodies — songs like "My Darling Child," the a cappella "Tiny Grief Song," and "Scorn Not His Simplicity," are strong enough to support the gravity of the album's dramatic themes, and provide an effective equilibrium throughout.

"Red Football" begins eerily with piano and calm vocals only to collapse into a wild roar of electric guitar, drums and bass. While O'Connor wails a ferocious string of mocking revenge, she winds up sounding hilarious, in an enjoyably evil way.

In "Famine," O'Connor rants about the problems of the Irish people, past and present, and the fate of Ireland as a whole.

But the other 12 songs are remarkable in their sensitivities. O'Connor's voice starts soft and gentle and usually ends up soaring at full-throttle.

"In This Heart," and "Tiny Grief Song," are voice-only gems, and are so simple and yet intricately crafted lyrically, that they become more powerful than any of the album's other instrument-laden songs.

With a brooding spirit, and passionate honesty, "Universal Mother" becomes a series of explicit short stories and puts O'Connor back on the scene as a rock-n'-roller, political activist, and disturbed spirit, finding a voice in short, solemn songs.

— Steven Spurling



There are no small victories in the fight against heart disease.



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Exhibit

Continued from Page 9

resemble a marble surface bearing Latin phrases. The effect is philosophical and lighthearted at the same time.

Hansen does not have this subtlety in her work.

Her photography gives life to dead images. Dead birds seem to be a running theme with Hansen. On an untitled work, she took a variety of dead birds, maybe sparrows, and posed them like fruit in a bowl.

On another, she shot a close-up of a dead bird with every aspect of its withered body in detail.

These grotesque yet interesting images give new meaning to the phrase "still life." It almost seems like an attempt at a parody.

"Encoded Trees" is void of dead birds, but it does depict barren trees and fields. The painting's border is a

pattern of alternating faces, one face blocked out and the other in negative print. Scribbled words break up the nine tree images and make the photograph talk.

Her work is a nihilistic view of death and nature. It questions the existence of a hopeful future.

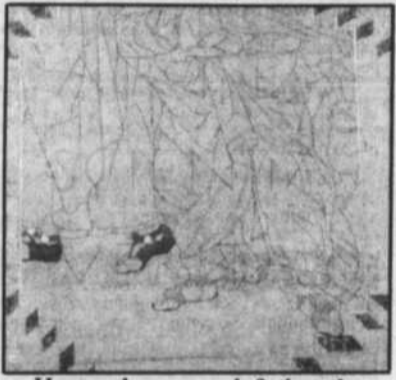
"History of Biosphere" is a "menu" of how the Earth should be and what people should do to make it work.

"Mix forests, deserts, swamps, prairies and plains. Ideal for living," the photo reads.

Both exhibits are evidence of two artists who are not afraid to question their art and mold it to fit their objectives.

Connell and Hansen have strong educational backgrounds and experience in their respective fields.

Connell received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from the University of Michigan and her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Colorado.



Hansen has never left the education circuit. She's an assistant professor of art at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. She served as chairwoman and treasurer of the Midwest Society for Photographic Education. She also is the editor of "Artful Dodger" in Wooster.

The gallery, in Room 102 of Richards Hall, is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

BOOK Review

"Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas" Tom Robbins Bantam Books Grade: B-

You're browsing through the bookstore. Ahhh ... the new Tom Robbins book, "Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas." You smile. You finger its ecru dust jacket. You move on.

If the last paragraph annoyed you, don't read Robbins' latest work. The book is written in second-person tense. Hence, you, the reader, are treated as the main character, Gwen Mati.

This wouldn't be so bad if Gwen were a likable sort, but the money-hungry stockbroker is downright annoying throughout most of the book.

Gwen's story opens on Good Friday Eve in Seattle. The stock market has taken an especially dramatic nose dive, and Gwen, a mediocre broker at best, is desperate.

Enter Larry Diamond, former financial genius, long-winded eccentric, rectal cancer victim and likable weirdo.

Larry takes a liking to Gwen.

And Gwen — prim, proper and more than a little uptight — is disgusted with Larry.

But their paths keep crossing. Gwen tries to put her financial life together before the market opens again on Monday, but strange things keep happening.

She's assaulted by a band of rich kids. Her boring but rich Lutheran boyfriend needs her help searching for his born-again pet monkey. And her psychic neighbor Q-Jo Huffington disappears.

And of course there's Larry. Robbins seems to choose a character in each book to use as a mouthpiece for his own strange ramblings. Larry is that mouthpiece.

This time, Robbins is going on (and on and on) about aliens from the Sirius system, the superiority of amphibians to reptiles and the wisdom of the Bozo tribe in Africa.

The book is interesting. Robbins has a flair for the bizarre, and his books — "Still Life With Woodpecker" and "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues," for example — always have a myriad of strange characters.



Kal Wilken/DN

But this time, Robbins tries to do and say too much. The story follows a breakneck pace so that Gwen can finish her adventure by Monday. But Monday comes and the book ends before Robbins ties up loose ends.

True-blue Robbins fans will read the book anyway just to savor his way with words. The author wields a metaphor like nobody's business, and to say that his language is colorful is a criminal understatement.

Even when Robbins is confusing, he's delicious.

— Rainbow Rowell

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