

Lasers

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school, said he always was willing to experiment with new ways to help his students. Mann said the school had a number of low-vision and partially sighted students who were able to see the lasers.

The contrast of complete darkness with the intense laser light allows visually impaired people to see the lasers, he said. This contrast does not occur with natural light. Because everyone's degree of blindness varies, Mann said, each person had a different experience.

Some visually impaired people fail to see anything, while others can see movement, light and color, Mann said. Those who can see the lasers react with awe, he said.

"Kids can't stop talking about it," he said. "They're so excited they have trouble coming up with words to explain what they're seeing."

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

A conference sponsored by the Fulbright Association, Teachers' College and International Affairs will be held at the Wick Alumni Center, 16th & R Street, on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus starting at 8:30 am on Friday, November 11, and 9:00 am on Saturday, November 12, 1994.

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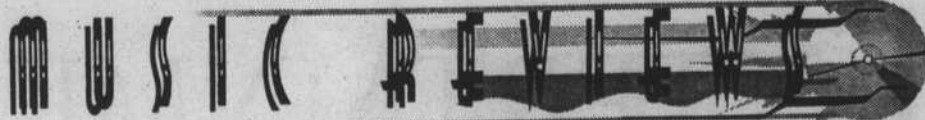
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"Stoner Witch" Melvins Atlantic Records Grade: D

The Melvins always have been a romantic target for rock critics looking to pinpoint the roots of "grunge rock" because of their long list of obscure independent albums and their Aberdeen, Wash., residency.

They developed the sound Seattleites entitled "grunge" seven years previous to the release of Nirvana's "Nevermind." The Melvins were the pioneers, yet, ironically, even after the fateful year that punk broke, they remained undiscovered.

However, "Stoner Witch," the follow-up to their first major label debut, serves to shatter the truth behind any such dramatic storytelling. Quite simply, while the bands of Seattle dabbled in more complex rhythms, a greater depth of texture and empathetic lyrics, the Melvins choose a different route, trapping themselves in the loud darkness of bands long past.

And "Stoner Witch" continues down this narrow path. Although one cannot help but notice pieces of "Bleach" and a few daring riffs floating amid the power chords of the album's faster tracks, the metallike sounds stunt any progress.

Songs such as "Skweetis" and "Revolve" resemble a Glen Danzig side project. The result is far from anything that bands such as Green River ever imagined — stale rock teetering between metal, hard-core and painful chaos.

However, when the annoying vocals are silenced as in the instrumental "Junebug," the Melvins prove they can develop a worthwhile melody.

Relaxing King Buzz's overdone wails and shifting into a slower gear, they display a somewhat redeeming diversity in songs such as "Goose Freight Train," taking the

listener on a tour of almost spooky bass lines and jazzy repetition.

Unfortunately, in the end, the quiet moments that interrupt the noise of such songs as "Roadbull" absorb the first three minutes of most tracks, and dominant epics such as "Lividity" fall victim to a lack of imagination that give them the quality of purposeless metallic sludge.

Although the Melvins may be both diverse and loud, their new album fails to illustrate their lineage to the post-punk sound and leaves the listener knee-deep in annoying, overexaggerated rock.

— Matt Kudlacz



"The Cult" The Cult Sire Records Grade: B+

With the release of 1989's "Sonic Temple," The Cult seemed destined for greatness. It was the follow-up to the hugely successful "Electric," and the singles "Sun King" and "Fire Woman" received considerable airplay.

Then the bubble burst with the 1991 release of "Ceremony." This album sat there, floated a bit and then sank into obscurity.

Well, it's been three years, and The Cult is back. Although produced by Bob Rock — who produced "Sonic Temple" — "The Cult" is not as heavy or as guitar-centered as the band's earlier efforts.

The Cult seems to have taken

the sound from "Love" and "Dreamtime" and refined it for the '90s, tossing in bits of organ and other instruments one would never dream of hearing on a Cult album.

"The Cult" opens up with "Gone," a ripping song, followed by "Coming Down (Drug Tongue)," the album's first single. "Coming Down" is a great song, and its grooves grab the listener from the start and don't let go. Followed by "Real Grrr!" and "Black Sun," these songs show the influence of the "Love" sound.

One true standout on this album is "Sacred Life," which deals with the deaths of people like River Phoenix and Kurt Cobain. It is a wonderful song that shows that even though Ian Astbury may have lost those long black locks, he hasn't lost his singing ability.

Guitarist Billy Duffy holds back on this album, and although he does jam on a number of the songs, he never cuts loose.

All in all, this is a good, solid album. The Cult has been around a long time, producing albums under several different names, and it is hoped that "The Cult" will help the band achieve the level of success it deserves.

— William Harms



"Unplugged in New York" Nirvana Geffen Records Grade: A-

Nirvana, the band that wouldn't give up even after the death of lead

singer Kurt Cobain, lives on in its latest release, MTV's "Unplugged in New York."

It may be the last tribute to Cobain's creation of a new musical genre. "Unplugged" features all the trademark Nirvana songs permeated by Cobain's haunting voice.

Cobain sings with pain on the album's first song, "Come as You Are," as his caustic voice forces itself on a truly fatalistic song.

Hearing Cobain's conversations between songs is almost eerie. His calm demeanor and persona contrast with his lyrical fury. Cobain jokes with bassist Krist Novoselic and drummer Dave Grohl and then launches into song.

Almost any Nirvana fan will choke up over the oozing symbolism and irony on "Jesus Doesn't Want Me for a Sunbeam."

It cries out with such sympathy and sincerity that it's hard not to feel something — anything — at all. The song has almost a Celtic ring to it that implies a sort of spiritual emotion.

"Pennyroyal Tea," a great song in studio version, is full of Cobain's mulling spirit. The raw-edged acoustic guitar sharpens the overall tone of the song.

"Unplugged" lends depth and a deeper personality to Nirvana's songs "Polly," "Something in the Way," "Plateau," and "All Apologies."

The 14-song compilation ends with "Where Did You Sleep Last Night," which is, appropriately, peaceful — the way Cobain's life should have ended.

The jury on Cobain's value to society is still out, but no matter what the verdict, Cobain truly was a great inspiration to a stagnant musical world in desperate need of change.

This true genius was captured one last time on "Unplugged." May Cobain's memory and influence live on.

— Paula Lavigne



"Couplehood" Paul Reiser Bantam Books Grade: A-

"So there we were, on the brink of the Next Big Thing. Forever. The Final Frontier. We stared at each other for a moment, and then I thought, 'Uh-oh, if this person's going to be with me forever, she's going to find out what I'm really like. That can't be good.'"

Paul Reiser took a break from his incessant comedic worrying recently to sit down in front of a word processor and do more of the same.

And "Couplehood" happened. A loose description of what it is to be in love, the book actually tackles a number of topics, including Reiser's stand-up material and his work on NBC's sitcom "Mad About You."

The reader follows Reiser, however illogically nutty his concerns, like a Branch Davidian, entranced with the conversation style and wit he displays.

A laugh ensues even upon opening the book, as the text begins on Page 145, so, as Reiser explains, you've reached the middle before you've even begun, and you feel like you've accomplished something. Plus, he gets credit for writing a bigger book.

From that point, his keen observations of the oddities of daily life, combined with his personal, often sardonic tone, prove inescapably humorous.

So clever is his style, the reader finds himself or herself inexplicably knee-deep in the secrets of companionship at the book's closing, able to remember only Reiser's descriptions of his half-hour conversations with his wife about "The Jeffersons" and discussions about fishing for the bodies of union bosses.

"Love can't be the topic of this," you think, ripping through chapters. "He's funny, but right now he's talking about grapefruit. I'm not really seeing any love there." And then — Boom! — you're done.

And suddenly, his message is clear, and you say, "Oh," not really sure how you got to the point that you did but positive that "Couplehood" is quite a ride.

— Matt Kudlacz



Courtesy of Bantam Books

Doom

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The real story of "Doom" begins with id Software, as it sought to develop a game that would provide realistic sounds, animation and action in a first-person-perspective action-adventure.

id Software met and exceeded its goals with this game. In addition to a realistic virtual reality environment, "Doom" can be played over a network, a modem or a simple cable

between two computers.

In a network game, up to four players interact with each other and the hellish "Doom" reality in order to save humanity. A much more popular multi-player "Doom" game is a competitive "death match," in which players fight each other with an assortment of chain guns, rifles and rocket launchers.

In an interview over the Internet, Dave Taylor, one of the programmers of "Doom," said 100,000 people had registered "Doom."

Taylor also said five times that

number of people had purchased the sequel, "Doom II," in three weeks.

Although Taylor doesn't play his creation much anymore, he does hear stories about it.

"A guy, after death-matching for several hours one night, decided to drive home. He saw a concrete pylon on the shoulder of the road and swerved to intercept it, thinking it was a missile," Taylor said.

"Doom" mania continues to spread. A virtual reality entertainment center in Milwaukee held a public "Doom" tournament last week-

end.

Although the threat of the "Doom" invasion is minimal (for the time being), people can join in on the virtual blood bath by simply connecting to the Internet and downloading a copy of "Doom" to their computer.

For those who are computer literate, "Doom" is available on the Internet via anonymous FTP at infant2.sphs.indiana.edu.

Those interested in "Doom" but not the Internet can buy the shareware "Doom" for only \$5 on disk at a computer store.