

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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R.E.M.
"Murmur"
I.R.S. Records
1983

The college music scene was forever changed when R.E.M. released their first album, "Murmur." And although I didn't discover it for several years, "Murmur" has since had a significant effect on my own life.

"Murmur" was the beginning of what eventually was deemed the alternative music scene.

For me, it was the beginning of a love affair that never betrays.

"Murmur" is one of those albums that you can pull out and listen to at any time; "Murmur" is both sadness and happiness, hope and despair.

Michael Stipe's criminally incoherent vocals were ignored by the listener. I think sometimes he made them up as he went along, singing on feeling alone. Yet, I didn't care that the songs didn't make sense because I could float to the heavens on the feeling they gave me.

"Murmur" has power. Not hit-you-over-the-head-power, but the power of the soft touch of someone you love, or a gentle spring breeze underneath a shade tree.

"Perfect Circle," the album's sixth track, still gives me goose bumps if I sit and lose myself in the song.

Listening to "Perfect Circle," I felt like Stipe must have written the song after having a vision. Awakened from a dream, inspired by some higher voice, he sat down with his band mates and, in a trance, wrote the song.

That R.E.M. doesn't exist anymore.

I've heard every R.E.M. album since the high-flying "Murmur," and everything crashes in comparison.

I'm not saying I don't like the newer stuff, but nothing is quite the same.

Every once in awhile the band lifts me, but I never fly. There are a few bright spots, but never a heavenly shine.

I need "Catapult," and they give me "Stand." I beg for "Laughing," and I get "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?"

It's saddening to hear people proclaim to be R.E.M. fans and then say they've never heard "Murmur." I want to say, "You've never heard R.E.M."

I'm not much of a musician. But I often tell people that if I could learn to play "Murmur" on a guitar, I would sit on a street corner for the rest of my life strumming the album and doing my best to croon like Michael Stipe.

"Out of time" — no way.

— Chris Hain, senior news-editorial and political science major and Daily Nebraskan senior reporter

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Jefferson in Paris



Courtesy of Buena Vista Pictures

American ambassador Thomas Jefferson (Nick Nolte) falls in love with Sally Hemings (Thandie Newton) in "Jefferson in Paris."

'Jefferson' not heroic

By Jeff Randall
Film Critic

One of the main problems with a lot of historical dramas is the choice of narrator. When the wrong choice is made, audiences are often left wondering how the person telling the story could possibly know so many details about the figure being examined.

In some cases, filmmakers make the correct choice. Take, for example, the ex-lovers of Ludwig von Beethoven in "Immortal Beloved" or the rival composer Salieri in "Amadeus."

But it's hard to believe that Thomas Jefferson's American-

The Facts

Film: Jefferson in Paris

Director: James Ivory

Stars: Nick Nolte, Greta Scacchi, James Earl Jones

Rating: PG-13

Grade: D

Five Words: Jefferson fathers more than America.

born son would know so much about the details of his late father's life in pre-revolutionary France, long before he was even born.

It's not only hard to believe, it's ridiculous to the point that the entire film is nearly ruined by it.

Nearly ruined. Various other choices finished the job.

In "Jefferson in Paris," James Earl Jones portrays Madison Hemings, one of Jefferson's (Nick Nolte) illegitimate children who decides to spill the beans about his late father's less-than-idealistic endeavors. Among those is an affair with Sally Hemings, one of Jefferson's slaves, which results in Madison's birth.

As Madison Hemings recounts his father's story to an eager reporter (Tim Choate), the film shifts its setting to Paris between 1784 and 1789, the years in which Thomas Jefferson served as ambassador to the court of King Louis XVI (Michael Lonsdale).

During this time period, Jefferson developed a close personal relationship with Maria Cosway (Greta Scacchi), an English aristocrat who happened to be already married.

But no matter how many of Jefferson's flaws are brought to

light, it seems as though director James Ivory had a hard time making such a romanticized American hero look all that bad.

Jefferson regularly breaks into overly dramatic speeches straight out of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Even his illicit affairs are cast in a light that make them appear more the product of the women's flirting than his own loneliness.

The end result is a film that accomplishes very little with the exception of its glimpse into a society near breakdown. But the scenes of aristocratic revelry and revolutionary fury have little to do with the narrative, and they only end up detracting from the focus on Jefferson.

When even the director of a film can't keep his attention on the subject at hand, he leaves little initiative for the audience to do so.

New videos like box of chocolates

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

A potpourri of films will come on video this week, kind of a horrific, adventure-filled, funny, Oscar-winning potpourri.

"Terminal Velocity" — Charlie Sheen adds his name to the list of actors to star in adrenaline flicks with his work in "Terminal Velocity."

He stars as a daredevil skydiver who watches a fellow skydiver (Nastassia Kinski) fall to her death, but does she really die? He doesn't think so.

There are better adrenaline flicks than this one available, but there are also worse ones. Roll the dice.

"Hoop Dreams" — This is the film that raised the stink at the Academy Awards because it wasn't nominated for any award beyond Best Film Editing (and it didn't win).

In what should have been a nominee for either Best Picture or Best Documentary, "Hoop Dreams" follows two inner-city youths who hope to achieve their dream of one day playing professional basketball.

This one is a must-see. Check it out.

"Puppet Masters" — It looks like, smells like and sounds like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," but according to the title,

See VIDEO on 10

Affairs of the heart to be heard on air

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

For some people, talking about personal issues such as love, sex and marriage can be uncomfortable, even among the closest of friends.

But two professors at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are comfortable enough to talk about their own relationship on statewide radio, and they plan to do so, starting May 2.

Collie W. Conoley and Jane Close Conoley will host "For Better or Worse," a call-in radio talk show for the Nebraska Public Radio Network. Collie Conoley is an associate professor of educational psychology and

Jane Close Conoley is associate dean of the teachers college and a professor of educational psychology.

Both of them have had experience instructing classes on marriage and child therapy.

Collie Conoley said the show, which will focus on the complexities and secrets of a long-lasting relationship, would be a good opportunity for people to educate themselves and ask questions.

"We're hoping that there will be a lot of people with issues that they want to raise regarding relationships," he said. "And we're hoping that we can help those

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