

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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State of the ARTS

Cliff A. Hicks

Sampling music, or stealing it?

"It's a lot of humor... a lot of theft... a lot of scamming... all of the things rock 'n' roll was always good at."

That from U2's ZooTV.

Art. Music. Noise. Theft. None can be accurately defined, because they all exist as based upon the opinion of the masses, a source of constant change. Thus, their limits and boundaries will never be defined in stone, much to some people's discouragement.

As the music industry heads into the 21st century, the guidelines constituting what is original music and what is theft are touchy. Some call "samplers" hackers; others call them artists of the mass media. Either way, the basics are the same.

Two major cases dealing with sampling show the history of the debate and also have set precedent for the debate to come.

First, the people who won — 2 Live Crew. On March 7, 1994, the Supreme Court ruled that 2 Live Crew's "remake" of the Roy Orbison song "Pretty Woman" was a parody (since the lyrics were almost all different) and thus protected by the "fair use" section of copyright law.

Then there are the people who lost — Negativland. In 1991, the group released "U2/Negativland," a single that contained, among other things, a 32-second sample from "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" and obscene out-takes of Top 40 disc jockey Casey Kasem.

Negativland had the record sued out of existence by Island Records (U2's label). Later, members also were sued by their former label, SST Records. At present, all groups have given Negativland permission to release the single privately if Casey Kasem agrees, which he has not done.

The whole story can be read in "Fair Use, The Story of the Letter U and the Numeral 2," which is, of course, slanted to portray Negativland in a favorable light. But they were as much in the wrong as anyone else, mainly for their unwillingness to shoulder any of the blame for the incident. But you can read for yourself and judge. That's what freedom is all about, right?

So what constitutes theft and what constitutes art/music/noise? There isn't a definitive answer. Under copyright law, which makes tax forms look like the ABCs, five seconds can be illegal, but almost an entire song doesn't have to be.

So what can we expect to see for sampling as we head into the 21st century? Are copyright laws going to have to be rewritten?

Another problem is that, like pornography, there can be no guidelines set in stone, and how much is too much is still left to the individual.

But something has to be done soon ... freedom v. theft. So, who is going to say how much is too much? YOU?

Hicks is a freshman English and news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.



Courtesy of Castle Rock Entertainment

Michael Douglas stars as widowed president Andrew Shepherd in Rob Reiner's latest film, "The American President."

'President' mixes romance with politics

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

Should the president of the United States of America be allowed to date and court a girlfriend?

(Don't get excited, Bill, we're talking about an UNMARRIED president here.)

Actually, in "The American President," Democratic President Andrew Shepherd (Michael Douglas) isn't a bachelor, but a widower with a 12-year-old daughter (Shawna Waldron, "Little Giants").

Single life certainly hasn't hurt him in the public's eye; after three years as president, his administration has achieved a 64 percent approval rating.

(Keep dreaming, Bill.) Election time awaits, and Shepherd's crime bill has met with some resistance, and an environmental bill is moved out of the way, but gets thrown back in his face by Sydney Ellen Wade (Annette Bening), a professional lobbyist.

Wade manages to — not just once, but twice — stick her foot in her mouth with Shepherd, but sparks fly nonetheless. Shepherd falls hard, and Wade follows close behind.

Unfortunately, the ever-nosy public displays some disapproval of this, and character attacks by loose-jawed presidential hopeful Sen. Robert Rumson (Richard Dreyfuss) make the situation even more strained.

The movie adds another jewel to director-producer Rob Reiner's shiny crown, already decorated from such films as "A Few Good Men," "When Harry Met Sally" and "Misery." He makes a good solid film from beginning to (almost) the end and also has some terrific talent to back him up.

Douglas and Bening both turn in exceptional performances and show some wonderful chemistry in this delightful romantic-comedy.

It is refreshing to see Douglas in a film not involving explicit sexual situations ("Basic Instinct," "Disclosure") and allowing him some room to show his versatility. Bening also continues her streak of great work already demonstrated in "Bugsy," "The Grifters" and "Love Affair."

(By the way, has anyone else noticed how much Bening looks like the lady in the TriStar film logo? Just curious.)

The supporting cast is both exceptional and plentiful, including Martin Sheen, Samantha Mathis, David Paymer and Michael J. Fox, who (God forgive me) actually has a very inspiring

The Facts

Film: "The American President"

Stars: Michael Douglas, Annette Bening, Martin Sheen

Director: Rob Reiner

Rating: PG-13 (language, adult situations)

Grade: A-

Five Words: The politics of dating ... literally

and well-delivered monologue toward the end of the film.

(Word through the grapevine on this film: Watch out Academy Awards!)

Although the last 30 minutes fall flat, the rest of the film brims with romance, comedy and a political jab or two with some looks behind the scenes (picturing Clinton calling Gingrich a "blowhole" just kind of makes you proud to be an American, doesn't it?)

"The American President" works on all levels, and is one of the first "must-see" films for the holiday season.

Go for it.

Redman jazzes up the Lied

By Jeff Randall
Music Critic

For two hours Friday night, New York jazz was alive in Lincoln.

And no one could have been happier than saxophonist Joshua Redman.

"It's great to see so many jazz fans here in Nebraska," Redman said to the crowd at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

"Or maybe you aren't," he added with a smile. "Maybe 'Melrose Place' just wasn't on tonight."

Redman continued in this vein throughout the night, following heartfelt appreciation for the enthusiastic Midwestern crowd with good-natured barbs, including a multitude of corn jokes.

But in the end, the jokes were left behind by

the sheer talent of Joshua Redman's quintet. Led by Redman, the quintet put forth a mixture of original compositions and jazz standards that energized both the crowd and the band.

They opened with "Mischief" and "The Oneness of Two (In Three)," two numbers off Redman's 1994 album "Mood Swing."

The enthusiasm and humor continued to pour from the stage as Redman announced that the band would perform a brand new composition, "Pantomime," that was reserved only for "the hip audiences."

"In New York, the audiences are all right," Redman said. "But they're too uptight sometimes. Maybe I should bring them back some corn stalks."

But corn had very little to do with the receptive crowd; good music had everything to do with it.

By the time the band left the stage for the last time of the night, the crowd was thoroughly satisfied and, if appearances aren't deceiving, so was Redman.

Singers shine in 'Superstar' despite venue

By John Fulwider
Theater Critic

The cast and crew of "Jesus Christ Superstar" put on an energetic show Friday night at Pershing Auditorium. They deserved a standing ovation, and they got it.

Aside from some technical difficulties, "Superstar" was a fine production, full of vigor and emotion.

The music, composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber and performed by a live band, was outstanding. Not a note or a beat was missed.

Ted Neeley shined as Jesus. To steal a line from "Wayne's World," that man can wail. In "Gethsemane," when Jesus asked God why he

See 'SUPERSTAR' on 10