

## Newsboys rock with God, bring message to Pershing

Newsboys entertain with sci-fi equipment and space suits.

By ANN STACK  
Music Critic

The floor literally shook Friday night at the Pershing Auditorium with the force of the some 2,000 fans there to see the Newsboys perform their brand of Christian rock.

People from all walks of life turned out for a night of holy rockin' n' rollin'; everyone from the pre-teen crowd to the baby boomers. But the overwhelming majority of the crowd was young people. The average age was about 16, a refreshing and hopeful sign.

Promoting their sixth album, "Take Me To Your Leader," the Newsboys put on an amazing show, packed with high energy and a zest for life. The theme was obviously sci-fi, with the band descending from three stages that later served as tambourine-shaped screens.

They opened their 90-minute set with the title cut from their fourth album, "Not Ashamed," to an enormous crowd response.

They then played a decent mixture of classic Newsboys material, including "Spirit Thing" and an audience-participation version of "Shine," plus several songs from the new album. The crowd reaction—a stage diver who made it around security, a young bodysurfer and a mini mosh pit—brought to mind the question: "Does God mosh?"

One thing was clear—the Newsboys aren't ones to take themselves too seriously. They even have a movie coming out next month called "Down Under The Big Top." It's a film version of their song, "Reality."

Songwriter/drummer and co-founder Peter Furler said the movie and song are a kick-off

on the story of the prodigal son. But this is a '90s version: The boy runs away to join the circus and gets a job shoveling elephant dung. During the song, bits of the movie flashed on the three screen overhead.

"People wander a long ways from God and his love," Furler said. "He forgives all the things we do, even though we find it hard to forgive and forget."

Of course, they performed the power-pop bass-infused "Take Me To Your Leader" to the delight of the arm-waving audience. And in typical Newsboys fashion, too—in blue leather suits.

For the encore, they performed the powerful, soul-searching "Lost The Plot."

"When you come back again would you bring me something from the fridge?" the Newsboys wailed. "Heard a rumor that the end is near but I just got comfortable here./ Sigh./ Let's be blunt./ I'm a little distracted./ What do you want?"

They finished with the rousing "Breakfast," throwing cereal on the audience while a balloon spaceship circled overhead.

The real show-stealer and personal favorite was Geoff Moore and the Distance, who performed after opening act Plankeye. Moore is truly blessed as a songwriter and musician.

Their too-short set was highly energized, the music just on the harder side of pop. The lyrics were fresh and insightful, the songs melodic and innovative. They performed several cuts from their ninth album, "Greatest Hits," including a couple of new tunes.

Moore slowed down mid-set to perform two sweet, heart-felt acoustic songs that brought more than a tear to this reviewer's eye. He also paused to share his faith with the audience.

"I feel really fired up about being a Christian, but mostly when it's convenient," Moore said, while candles burned on the stage behind him. He urged everyone to "remember your vow ... remember the night you became a Christian."

## Rockin' in the free world



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

OWEN CLEASBY of the band Gregory screams into the microphone Saturday night at a benefit concert sponsored by Amnesty International at the Culture Center.

# that thing you do!

Great script makes Hanks' *That Thing You Do!* impressive

### The Facts

Film: "That Thing You Do!"  
Cast: Tom Everett Scott, Liv Tyler, Tom Hanks, Johnathon Schaech, Steve Zahn, Ethan Embry, Charlize Theron, Chris Isaak, Kevin Pollack, Alex Rocco, Peter Scolari, Rita Wilson  
Director: Tom Hanks  
Rating: PG  
Grade: B+  
Five Words: Hanks' debut is a winner

by The WONDERS

By PATRICK MINER  
Movie Critic

If anyone was cynical of this movie before seeing it, it was me. It looked like a Beatles biography under a different name, and the end to a possible directing career for Tom Hanks.

I was wrong. "That Thing You Do!" is one of the best movies of the year, and one big reason is Tom Hanks' great directing and writing job.

The film opens in Erie, Penn., with Guy (Tom Everett Scott), a struggling musician, practicing his drums downstairs in his father's appliance store. Guy had played in a few bands before,

but none of them stayed together very long.

Meanwhile, an unnamed foursome was thinking up a band name so they could play at a local high school talent show. When the prospective drummer broke his arm leaping over a parking meter, the guitarist Lenny (Steve Zahn) and lead singer/songwriter Jimmy (Johnathon Schaech) ask Guy to join the band.

The rest was history.

Jimmy wrote a ballad called "That Thing You Do." Guy upped the tempo at the talent show, and the band had themselves a hit. Soon after, they joined the Play-Tone label courtesy of Mr. White (Tom Hanks), changed their name to "the Wonders," toured the

country, played on national television and became teen idols.

This movie could have been cheesy if it weren't for Hanks' excellent script. The film is humorous, with most of the cracks coming from Zahn's Lenny. Other characters, such as Guy, Jimmy and Faye (Liv Tyler), made up the more serious side of the film.

Hanks' directing job was very effective as well. His talent was best exemplified in the scene at the Illinois State Fair. The actors who played the members of the Wonders each had little or no previous experience as musicians but looked convincing. The camera-work in the scene was very well done.

The cast of newcomers who appeared in the film, namely the members of the band, were very impressive, with Scott taking top honors. Liv Tyler also made a huge contribution to the film, showing she is a lot better actress than most people would probably credit her as being. Portraying Faye, Jimmy's girlfriend, she is more a member of the band than the bass player, who is called just "the bass player." Tyler shows she can play the serious role, a far cry from her days of acting in her dad's Aerosmith videos.

This film is worth the money. If you're in the mood to see a feel-good movie or just want to rock out, "That Thing You Do!" is definitely for you.

## Plot makes confidants out of opposites

By LIZA HOLTMEIER  
Theater Critic

Picture two women. One speaks with the crispness of a New Englander and dresses in brown and gray suits; the other has a Texas twang and wears bright pink pants and puffy, painted shirts. The two would hardly seem candidates to become best friends.

But friends they were in this weekend's Theatix production, "A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking" by John Ford Noonan.

The play dealt with the relationship and eventual friendship of Maude Mix, convincingly played by Kathy Dudley, and Hannah Mae Bindler, comically played by Becca Babbitt.

The play began with Hannah Mae moving from Texas to become Maude's next-door neighbor. Hannah Mae was determined to become a part of Maude's life, but it was evident from the moment the play began that Maude had too much in her life already to handle Hannah Mae.

Eventually though, she succumbed to Hannah Mae's persistence. Not even Maude's adultery with Hannah Mae's husband, Carl

Please see CHICKS on 13.