

**New Releases**



**Sebadoh**  
"The Sebadoh"  
Sub Pop Records/Sire  
Records  
Grade: B

Sebadoh is revered as a songwriting powerhouse by indie rockers everywhere.

The band's coyly named new record, "The Sebadoh," won't alter its saintly status among its sceneric constituents.

However, it's debatable if the longtime purveyors of noisy pop are actually a great songwriting team.

Ever since 1991's "Smash Your Head On the Punk Rock," Sebadoh's Lou Barlow and Jason Loewenstein have explored the realms of indie-rock songwriting.

Barlow, a guitarist, is obviously the more mature craftsman on "The Sebadoh." Unfortunately, Loewenstein's songwriting isn't up to his guitarist's level.

For instance, Loewenstein's

opening track, "It's All You," is structured so jaggedly it reminds one of an uninspired, third-rate Fugazi piece.

The song is obviously the work of a musician who needs a group to get anything decent written at all.

Barlow's tunes, on the other hand, sound like they were written in their entirety, by one talented songwriter.

A library of great songs has been written in Loewenstein's fragmented style. This type of song is usually written by bands in a team-like setting rather than that of a lone songwriter.

Furthermore, it wouldn't be fair to compare "The Sebadoh" with the work of traditional songwriters such as Paul Westerberg, Elvis Costello or Vic Chesnutt. Those are different kinds of birds singing different types of songs.

However, Loewenstein's version of Sebadoh has considerable brethren to relate to.

It would be a safe guess that Sonic Youth and the now-defunct Pixies have written in a fashion similar to Loewenstein's democratic style, and their songs certainly aren't anything to shake a stick at.

Sebadoh's new record is healthy ground for a debate to take place about Loewenstein's talent.

What makes this album an optimal opportunity for such discourse is the nature of the recording.

"The Sebadoh" is by far the clearest-sounding recording the

band has released to date. This clarity reveals new insight on the songwriting duo's lyrics and voices.

Past Sebadoh releases have represented a low-fidelity sensibility that has been commonplace for indie-rock bands since the early '80s.

The brilliant aesthetic of a stellar "low-fi" recording is undeniable. However, the fact of the matter is that a band can hide a lot of crap underneath all that fuzz.

Loewenstein needs the distortion to cover his flaws.

His vocals and lyrics on the majority of "The Sebadoh" are far too emo-punk sounding for a man his age.

In contrast, Barlow's smooth-sounding, even-keeled delivery makes one want to crank the stereo, call in sick and drink beer all day. The guitarist's vocal style allows him to get away with singing about himself.

"If you're waiting for me to tie you up and set you free - you better not wait all day," Barlow sings.

And not a scream in sight.

Which makes "The Sebadoh" worth the money for longtime fans of the band or anyone who is yet to be acquainted with Barlow's work.

The album, however, doesn't reach the noise-pop beauty consistently achieved in Sonic Youth's "Goo" or the Pixies' "Doolittle."

And it isn't Barlow's fault.

- Christopher Heine

# Musician to give free union show

By DANELL MCCOY  
Staff writer

She began her professional career when she was in seventh grade and nabbed her first gig in Omaha at the Swinging Door in 1969.

Since then, musician Susan Lewis Wright has traveled across North America performing solo and with various groups.

On Feb. 7, Wright will perform a free concert in the Nebraska Union Ballroom. The concert is sponsored by the University Program Council and the NU Baha'i Association.

Wright, who has opened for Tom Rush, Karla Bonoff and Jon Stewart, received Denver alternative newspaper Westword's "Best of Denver" award. In 1988, she was also judged best single act in a yearlong competition.

Her music consists of folk, pop, standard and original repertoires. At her concerts Wright gives the audience a sample of her ability with guitar, piano and flute - sometimes in the same song.

Wright has recorded two albums and also leads workshops on songwriting and topics such as Music as a Force for Social Change.

It is because of her workshops and the themes in her music that the Baha'i Association invited her to perform.

Wright is not a member of the

## Concert Preview

### The Facts

**Who:** Susan Lewis Wright  
**Where:** Nebraska Union Ballroom  
**When:** Sunday  
**Cost:** No charge  
**The Skinny:** Baha'i Association brings love to town with concert.

Baha'i faith, but was chosen by the group because she travels across the country spreading a message consistent with the beliefs of the faith.

"The Baha'i Association promotes race unity and equality between men and women," said concert organizer Dorothy Pederson. "Wright's music helps enforce these themes of social harmony."

The group also believes that it would be good to hold this type of a concert as close as possible to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

Promoting a free concert in the Nebraska Union is one way the organization is hoping to emphasize the messages of racial and gender equality to a larger group of people.

"We hope to bring about real positive social change, both on and off campus," Pederson said.

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