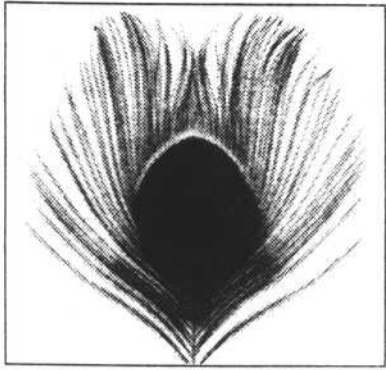


Music



XTC
"Apple Venus Vol. 1"
 TVT Records
 Grade: B

The longer between records, the higher expectations get. So the fact that XTC's recent release "Apple Venus Vol. 1" is a reasonably great album bodes well for the band.

It was seven years ago that "Nonsuch" came out, and in those seven years, the band lost a member, fled its label and recorded a slew of songs with nowhere to put them. The legal battles between XTC and Warner Bros. took a long time to iron out, and during that time XTC was constantly recording, thus the reason why this is "Apple Venus Vol. 1," as "Vol. 2" will be out sometime this year, supposedly.

Despite the departure of Dave Gregory (guitar/keyboards/backing vocals) midway recording, "Apple Venus Vol. 1" is still a strong, solid release. While Gregory may have departed, his fingerprints still line parts of the album. Of course the band didn't remove him from the recording entirely; instead of getting a new member for the band full time, Andy Partridge (vocals/guitar) and Colin Moulding (vocals/bass) just brought in studio players when they were needed and opt out of drums from quite a few of the tunes.

It also invited the London Session Orchestra to come live in their studio for a while.

The result is a bunch of lovely songs that are mostly appealing to the ear, with a couple of bad apples among the bunch.

With the orchestra playing much of the time, the album has a much more lush feel to it, a fuller, more satisfying sound, and one can hope that XTC has no notion of sending the orchestra away any time soon, because it adds what was missing from older albums.

"River of Orchids," the first track on the album begins with the sound of dropping water. Then plucking strings meander in, horns start to flutter and gradually more and more instruments start to fill in the sound, as Partridge's soothing voice rolls across the tune. It's a wearily optimistic, tired yet playful tone, one that sets the mood for much of the album.

Instead of whirling-dervish electric guitars, XTC returns to its older feel with mostly acoustic guitars and a springtime sound, as well as the sharp punster lyrics that Partridge and Moulding have been known for.

While many of the songs are good, there are a few songs that excel to that great status, and one that can be relegated to sub-mediocrity.

"Easter Theatre" toys with a solid

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drum beat, fleeting electric guitars, a strong trumpet, swaying strings and Partridge practically swooning life and love. The strings are even slightly distorted at one point, as Partridge whispers quietly into the microphone.

A lot of the time, it seems like Partridge is the only one in XTC, which actually makes "Knights In Shining Karma" such a pleasant listen. But this track, which holds only a simple electric guitar and Moulding's almost lullaby voice, build a simple verbal pun into a lovely, fragile little ballad like a soap bubble, beautiful and floating.

By far, the biggest orchestral bluster comes on "Green Man," with big, pounding and Middle Eastern-flavored strings as well as a sly little flute that plays follow-the-leader with Partridge. It's a song that encompasses a sound, like much of "Apple Venus Vol. 1."

Among all this sweetness, though, is perhaps one of the most bitter songs ever written for someone. "Your Dictionary" is a cynical, bitter and scathing letter from Partridge to his ex-wife that proves while XTC may have mellowed out, they haven't lost their fierce wit. Any song that has the guts with "H-A-T-E, is that how you spell 'love' in your dictionary?" doesn't have any plans on growing politeness anytime soon.

On the flip side, however, "Fruit Nut" has spoiled and long-since gone bad and should have been struck from the album long before it saw release.

A small polite message lines the bottom of the back of the album "Do what you will but harm none - You may like Apple Venus Volume 2."

We'll look forward to it, at least, and hope it doesn't take another seven years.

- Cliff Hicks

Lecturers mix art, science

By JEFF RANDALL
 Senior staff writer

Although they were considered masters in their arts, one would have been hard-pressed to find composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart or Giacomo Puccini anywhere near an operating room.

And although doctors are considered by most to be intelligent people, they don't have a reputation for authoring immortal musical works or time-tested theater productions.

Indeed, the only thing that medical science and high art seem to have in common is an air of intimidation for those who aren't familiar with them. But by the time this week has ended, one pair of professors from the University of Toronto will have attempted to change that perception.

Linda and Michael Hutcheon will give three lectures this week at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Hutcheons will present their lectures, grouped under the title "Opera Incarnate: Re-Viewing the Operatic Body," as part of the Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series.

The Hutcheons are a married couple who met in high school and now teach in separate departments at the University of Toronto. Linda Hutcheon is a professor of English and comparative literature. Michael Hutcheon is a professor and practitioner of medicine.

It was only after nearly two decades of marriage that these two academic minds were inspired to join forces in research. Their first collaborative work was an analysis of advertising in medical journals.

A few years later, Linda Hutcheon received an invitation from a group of undergraduate students to give a lecture about "the body and text." At first she was stumped, but her husband suggested that they combine his medical background with hers in literary analysis and give a presentation on the

Literature Preview

The Facts

What: "Opera Incarnate" lectures by Linda and Michael Hutcheon
Where: Ross Film Theater, 12th and R St.
When: Tonight, Wednesday and Thursday at 7 p.m.
Cost: Free
The Skinny: Art meets science meets academia

role that tuberculosis played in 19th-century opera.

Within two weeks, a lecture was completed and the seeds for a book - "Opera: Desire, Disease, Death" - were planted.

Although the marriage of two people and the marriage of art and science are completely different and potentially combustible, Michael Hutcheon said their personal relationship has only helped their professional one.

"When we're writing and we come to a conflict, we have more incentive to hammer it out and compromise," he said. "There's more at stake for us."

In "Opera," the Hutcheons examine the social significance of diseases as presented in musical theater. The book introduces a new field of research; and the new researchers faced some skepticism early in the writing process, particularly from Michael Hutcheon's colleagues.

"In medicine, people are bound to scientific reasoning and conclusions, and they had their doubts," Linda Hutcheon said.

When the book finally was published, it received glowing reviews not only in publications such as "The Economist," but also in the prestigious "New England Journal of Medicine."

"We were excited to be reviewed in the 'New England Journal,'" Linda Hutcheon said. "And thankfully it was a good review. If it had been a bad one, I don't know if we would have survived it."

The Hutcheons not only survived, they excelled. Their book was a success and they are now working on their second book as collaborators.

This book will provide a great deal of the material that the Hutcheons will present in this week's lectures.

Although their focus remains on opera, it has shifted slightly to cover the treatment of the human figure and physical presence on the stage. In "The Body Theatrical," they will discuss the detachment of voice and body that has resulted from technological innovations ranging from the telephone to the compact disc to the Internet. In "The Body Beautiful" and "The Body Dangerous" they will examine society's - and art's - implied connection between physical appearance and personality.

Thursday's lecture will be followed by a reception in the Great Hall of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN LECTURE SERIES

Three Multimedia Lectures by Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon

Opera Incarnate
 Re-viewing the Operatic Body
 6-8 April 1999

Linda Hutcheon is a professor of English and comparative literature at the University of Toronto. Michael Hutcheon, M.D., is a professor of medicine at the University of Toronto. The Hutcheons are coauthors of *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*.



TUESDAY, APRIL 6,
 7:00 PM
The Body Theatrical
 Embodying the Voice
 The Hutcheons argue that the new dichotomy for opera in the next century is not the traditional one of words versus music. Instead, it is the disembodied versus the embodied voice.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 7:00 PM
The Body Beautiful
 Plato's Operatic Legacy
 The Hutcheons explore how nineteenth-century operas began to deconstruct the Platonic legacy under the influence of the Romantic theory of the grotesque.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 7:00 PM
The Body Dangerous
 Salome Dances
 The Hutcheons explore how the sexualized dancer in Richard Strauss's opera Salome challenges dramatic convention.

A reception in the Great Hall of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery will follow this lecture. *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* will be available for purchase.

All lectures are free and open to the public, and held on the City Campus of UN-L in the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R Streets.

The annual Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series aims to remind the citizens of Lincoln and beyond of the principles that Lincoln championed: education, justice, tolerance, and union. Each year the University of Nebraska Press and other University of Nebraska departments sponsor a series of public lectures. The University of Nebraska Press publishes each year's lectures in a single volume.

If you wish to receive further information about the Abraham Lincoln Lecture Series, contact:
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