

Weasel's CD falls flat

By Jason Hardy
Staff writer

After hearing the latest Screeching Weasel release, some will undoubtedly wish to change the name from "Thank You Very Little" to "Thanks for Nothing."

A double CD anthology, "Thank You Very Little" is a 51-song retrospective of Screeching Weasel's illustrious career from the band's meager beginning in 1986 to its present incarnation. The second disc includes an entire live show from 1993, the era many consider to be SW's peak, and a few songs recorded off a videotape of the band rehearsing before the tour.

The first disc starts with the first song frontman Ben Weasel ever wrote for SW, a choppy little three-chord ditty called "I Hate Old Folks." It progresses to some alternate versions of previously released songs and some leftovers from various recording sessions.

Sound quality also improves over the course of disc one as the first six or seven songs sound pretty muffled.

The major problem with disc one is that there are 28 songs, many of which appear on other SW albums in a more polished form. Early versions of "I Need Therapy" and "I Wanna Be a Homosexual" sound better on SW's last anthology, "Kill the Musicians."

Versions of "Slogans," "Crying in My Beer," "Jeannie's Got a Problem With Her Uterus," "Every Night" and "Totally" sound better on the original albums they were released on. Those songs in this collection are meaningless



for anyone who owns the other albums. The collection includes songs like "Shirley's On Methadone" and "Amy Saw Me Looking At Her Boobs" that are just knockoffs of other songs. The only difference between "Shirley's On Methadone," and "Cindy's On Methadone," from SW's 1992 album, "My Brain Hurts," is the name of the poor methadone addict. Also "Amy Saw Me Looking At Her Boobs" was later turned into "Fuck the World" by the Queens and appeared on the album "Beat Off."

The last 13 tracks are leftover songs from some of SW's recording sessions. With many, it's obvious why they were left off.

However, some notables such as "Can't Takelit" and "My Own World," from the "Television City Dream" sessions and "Lose the Dink" and "Stuck Out Here" from the "Bark Like a Dog" sessions are included.

Overall, disc one is just way too long and full of too many songs that should have been left in the vaults,

Screeching Weasel

TITLE: Thank You Very Little
LABEL: Panic Button
GRADE: C
FIVE WORDS: Big on quantity, not quality.

including a number of covers that don't do their originals justice. Ben Weasel would have been better off if he had limited the number of songs to about 10 or 12 instead of 28.

The second disc is more or less bootleg quality and has some rough sounding tracks from a SW rehearsal before the 16-song live show which, quality-wise, don't sound a whole lot better than the rehearsal tracks.

The intimacy of the rehearsal tracks and an entire live show, hecklers and all, offers an honest look at how SW sounded in 1993, and is definitely worthwhile, because that incarnation of the band will most likely never tour again.

"Thank You Very Little" is a comprehensive look at SW and captures how the band changed in the past 15 years. It doesn't, however, honestly capture how good SW really was.

For hard core SW collectors "Thank You Very Little" is probably a worthwhile purchase but, for less involved fans, "Kill the Musicians" is definitely a better buy.

Bad, good flicks on tap

MOVIES from page 9

Feb. 18
"The Whole Nine Yards" - Hitman Bruce Willis moves into neurotic Matthew Perry's neighborhood.

Hilarity, I'm sure, ensues. Willis, with his swank deal with Disney, is on a roll. Perry is not.

"Drowning Mona" - Mona (Bette Midler) drives her car into a river, and every person in a small town becomes a suspect in her death, including Neve Campbell and Jamie Lee Curtis. Another comedy.

"Pitch Black" - A space fantasy of sorts, as a crew (of actors you've never heard of) crash lands on a planet inhabited with nasty aliens - but the aliens can only come out at night.

Feb. 25
"Wonder Boys" - Another possible Oscar contender moved from Christmas, as Michael Douglas plays an aging professor who wrote one great novel and then slipped into booze and obscurity. His protégé (Tobey Maguire) tries to pull him out of it with a little help from Katie Holmes and Frances McDormand. Directed by "LA Confidential" director Curtis Hanson.

"Reindeer Games" - Big action movie with Ben Affleck as a black-mailed ex-con pulling a casino heist. Charlize Theron and Gary Sinise co-star.

March 3
"Agnes Brown" - The only movie sandwiched between two big action dates, the film features Anjelica Huston directing herself as a woman learning to live after her husband goes kaput.

March 10
"Mission to Mars" - Tim Robbins, Gary Sinise and others go to Mars. Freaky things happen. Expect a lotta rusty red onscreen. Brian DePalma ("Scarface") directs.

"The Next Best Thing" - An aptly titled alternative to the big Mars flick should be interesting: Madonna and Rupert Everett battle over their son in court with an added twist - Everett's character is gay. John Schlesinger ("Midnight Cowboy") directs.

March 17
"Erin Brockovich" - Julia Roberts goes spring for once as a research assistant helping in a major cancer case. Steven Soderbergh, whose last two films, "Out of Sight" and "The Limey," were home runs, comes back.

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