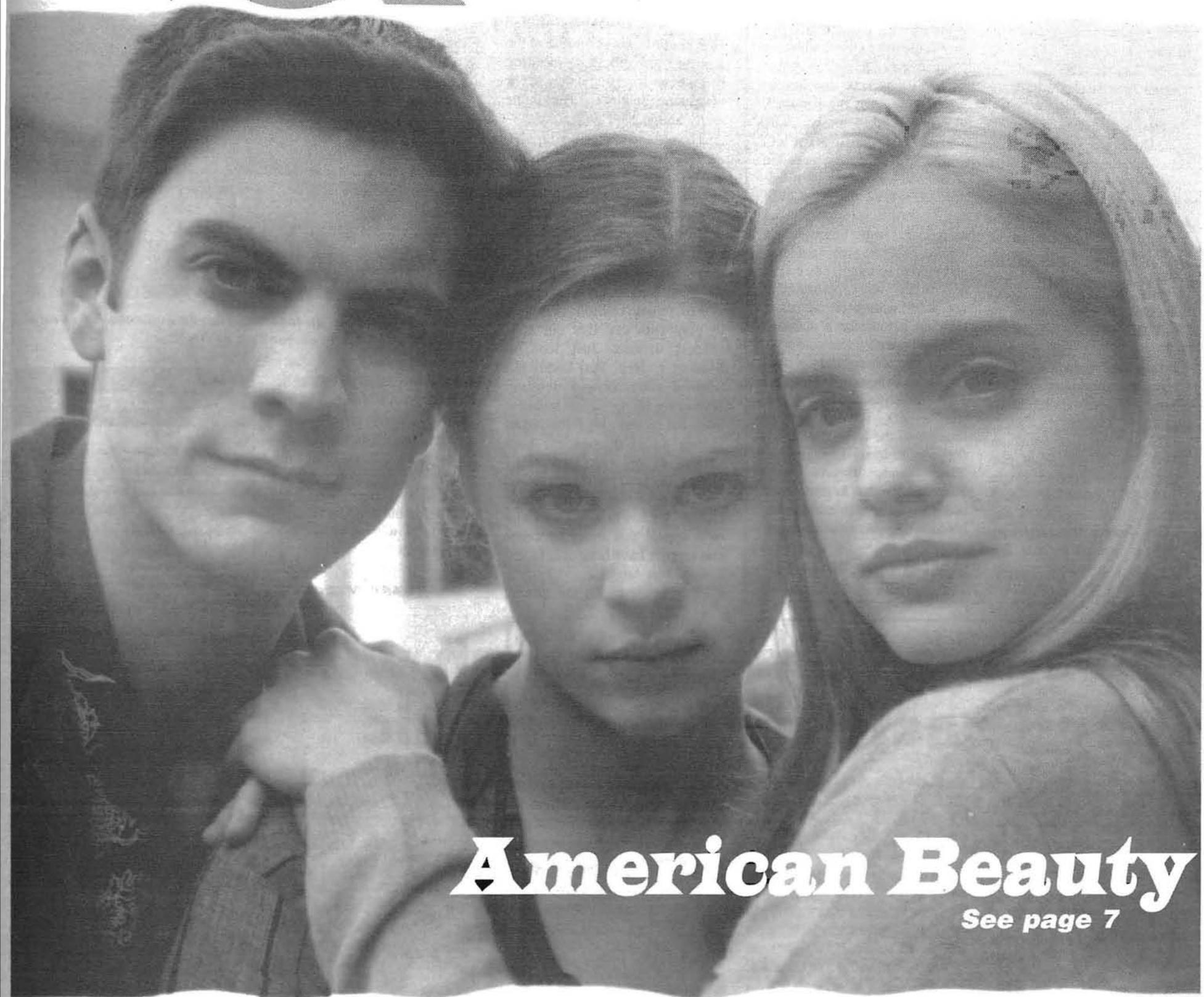


# Arts & Entertainment



## American Beauty

See page 7

### In this issue:



*It's all about the benjamins!*

Mark Wahlberg and Ice Cube star in 'Three Kings'. George Clooney also starts in the drama about three men attempting to steal gold during the Gulf War.

**See page 7**



*Reviews of new music*

Ruff Ryder member Eve recently dropped her rookie release. Check out her review along with many other new discs.

**See page 2**

# Eve hits it big after paying dues

**Eve**  
Ruff Ryders/Interscope

"And Adam called his wife name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." Genesis 3:20. Eve has been blamed throughout the centuries for the down fall of humankind, when she gave her husband, Adam, the apple from the forbidden tree. How appropriate the newest female rapper would be Eve, a.k.a. Eve of destruction.

More commonly known as Eve, she is the first lady of the Ruff Ryders from Philly. This platinum blonde blaze had to pay her dues. She was on the Root's "You Got Me", the remix to the "Ruff Ryders Anthem" and Blackstreet's "Girlfriend/Boyfriend."

On September 14th, her debut album, self titled "EVE" hit the shelves and it is hot.

The first single of the album, "What Y'all Want", went platinum and the second single, "Gotta Man," shows just as much promise.

This Puerto Rican/African-American diva will unfortunately have to go through the rites of passage that all female rappers have to go through. Others will try

catogriz her and compare her with rappers like, the great Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Foxy Brown and Lil Kim, to find where she fits in. But is it that simple for Eve? Does she have a political message in her lyrics? Yeah, she is sexy, and has no problem showing off her thick physique, but does she exploit it? Will she have more than one hit?

Unlike female rappers of the past, EVE has been able to balance her talents, making it difficult for her critics to place her in a pre-labled box. She has been able to hold on to her femininity and yet remain tough. She can be sexy in her videos, but she does not seem willing to rap about pimping herself for a diamond studded Rolex.

On this album, she collaborates with Drag-on and DMX of The Ruff Ryders, Missy Elliot, and The LOX. The beats are hard hitting and the lyrics dare to go deeper with tracks like "Love is Blind" and "Heaven only Knows". Eve has lasting power and it would be interesting to see her growth on her next album.

**CHARMANE MALONE**

# Is Puff Daddy really a rapper?

**Puff Daddy: "Forever"**  
Bad Boy Records

Ask any 13 year old boy from Iowa about Puff Daddy and they will have heard of the man, also known as Sean Combs of Bad Boy Records. He owns one of the newest and phattest clothing lines, Sean John and a New York restaurant, Justin's. But is he really a rapper?

There is no questioning that Puff Daddy's new album, "Forever", has some hot beats and he did do a good job selecting writers to come up with his lyrics, but can the man rap? There is no question that Combs, has produced some of the biggest hits of the late 1990's, but is he a rapper?

People with millions of dollars to play with can live out their wildest dreams. Just look at Shaquell O'Neil. Puff Daddy is a talented producer and deserves respect for being a great business man, but he can't rap! Instead of having to go through the hard knocks of the rap game, Puff Daddy has used his wealth to add to his list of titles and became a rapper. He has enjoyed the cross over appeal that many commercial rappers have been able to sell to suburban America.

The best track on this album,



**Puff Daddy has been on top of the music business for several years. His new disc is currently a best seller.**

is the remix of PE'S "Public Enemy #1" - "Public Enemy 2000. The beats are there and the lyrics are there, but there is no soul. This album was supposed to be a response to the critics that called "No Way Out" weak, but can you honestly be hard with a name like PUFF Daddy?

**CHARMANE MALONE**

# Rap oprea comes through with strong cast and great music

**"A Prince Among Thieves"**  
Tommy Boy Records  
Our opinion: \*\*\*\*

It is time Prince Paul gets credit for being the genius that he truly is. "A Prince Among Thieves" is proof enough to give him the credit.

"A Prince Among Thieves" is a concept disc along the lines of The Who's "Tommy". It is a rap opera, perhaps the first ever made. The story follows Tariq, an up and coming rapper with a problem. He needs money to record his demo, which causes him to sell drugs. The story ends in an epic shoot-out. The tale goes along with a yet to be made movie which would be released to theaters.

The story alone is run of the mill. What made it so great was the vast number of musicians who play the characters. It is a who's who of the

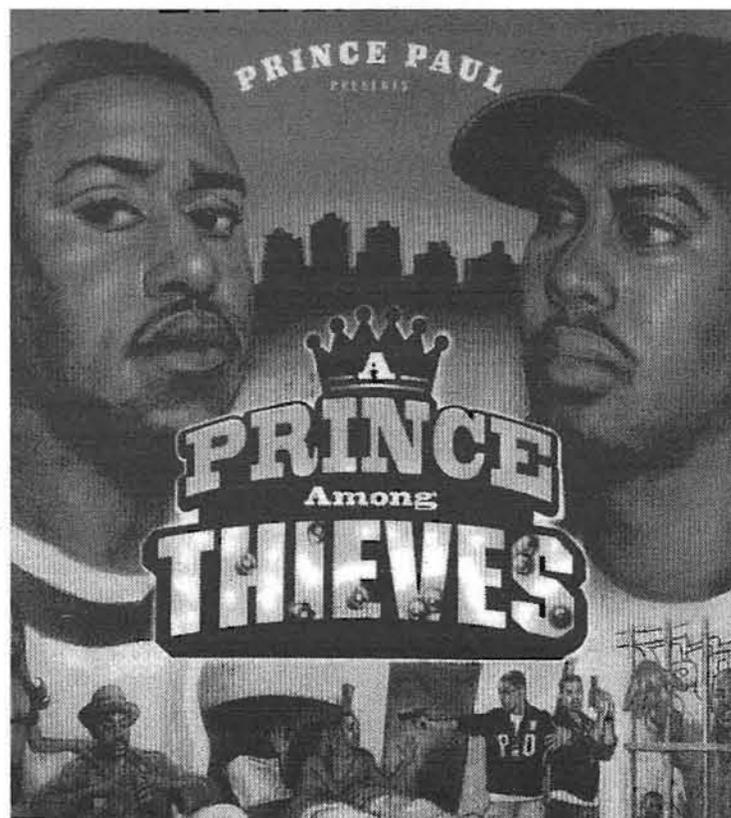
rap business. Everyone from Chris Rock, to Big Daddy Kane are featured.

This disc and the results are amazing. Everlast plays a crooked cop and turns in a great performance on "The Men in Blue".

Some of the stretches aren't to far off from characters the rappers had played before. Rock brings out his classic crackhead role for a skit. The always odd Kool Keith plays a wacky gun dealer. The casting is one of the discs biggest pluses. Each person fit their roles almost perfectly.

The collaborating between underground superstars Sadat X, Xzidit and Kid Creole on "Handle Your Time" is a classic. This track alone is reason to add this disc to your collection.

**KEN DUNKIN**



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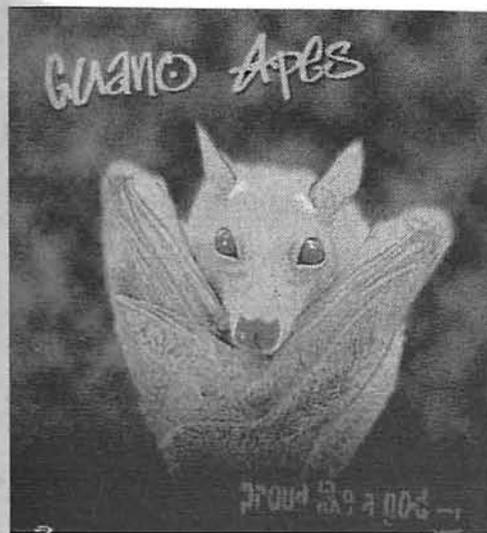
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# German Guano Apes are good, Drive By Truckers stink



**'Proud Like a God'**  
Label: Blackwood Music Inc (BMI)  
Our Rating \*\*\* 1/2

A first reaction when listening to a band from Germany called Guano Apes is to scoff. When a band with a dumb name and no press hits my desk, I usually wait until boredom strikes before popping it in the CD player. What a surprise to find out the Guano Apes were good! "Proud Like a God" plays like a harder-edged band with heart, something akin to the Deftones. Vocalist Sandra Nasic uses her great voice both in singing and screaming, without any trace of a German Accent. Her vocals sounds a little reminiscent to local band Radio Iodine, but with angrier music backing her up. "Proud Like a God" comes out Oct. 12.

**'Pizza Deliverance'**  
Label: Soul Dump / Ghostmeat records  
Our Rating: \*



REVIEWS BY CORY BLACKWOOD

It is difficult to put into words just how bad this CD truly is. Bluegrass isn't the most respected music out there to begin with, and not many people wonder why. Some things are just meant to be laughed at, and in the music industry, polka and bluegrass take care of that very well.

With guitars that sound purposefully out of tune (and not in that cool way like punk rock) and vocals more tone deaf than Britney Spears, listening to someone "squeal like a pig" would almost be favorable. No, it would be favorable. The one star is for its sheer comedic value.

# Showoff produces great, fun, happy rock music

If all music could be as fun as Showoffs debut disc the world would be a better place.

The group takes music for what it is, fun. Their music may not be the deepest, or the best and they aren't the best musicians. Despite those flaws this disc is good in its own right.

Picture Green Day and Less Than Jake having a jam session and this disc is what could come out. Most of the tracks are short, only around two and a half minutes. They give you a quick dose of good music and then it is off on another track.

With a catchy single in "Falling Star" the disc could take off. The world might not be ready for a band as fun as Showoff.

KEN DUNKIN

**'Showoff'**  
Label: Maverick Records  
Our Rating: \*\*\*



# 311 bombs on new release

311 has a pretty decent following throughout the nation, and in St. Louis as well. After their last album, "Transistor," many of us were wondering why they still had any fan base at all. "Soundsystem," due out Oct. 12, tries to go back to what they used to be — stoner frat rock with enough hip hop beats to give them some "street cred."

311 gave up any musical standards on "Soundsystem," instead trying for the one hit to make them millions. Who knows which song they had planned on doing, they all sound pretty much the same. "Come Original" is the first sin-

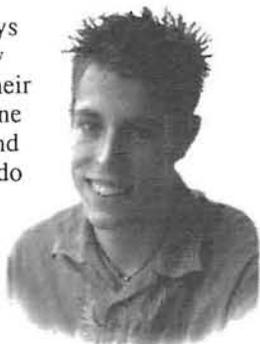
**'Soundsystem'**  
Label: Capricorn Records  
Our Rating: \* 1/2

gle, and by the time listeners make it to "Flowering," a mere two songs later, heads aren't bopping, but nodding off. 311 should have given up when they were still ahead — on 1994's "Grassroots."

CORY BLACKWOOD

# Support local music, unless it sucks

Everyone is always mouthing off about how people need to support their local scene, how no one supports local music, and that is what we should do as citizens of the same city as these budding musicians. I agree with this — to a point.



RANT & ROLL

CORY BLACKWOOD

St. Louis has a great music scene. It has some great bands that are very much worth supporting, and I do my best to show my support. Rolling Stone magazine recently mentioned St. Louis as having one of the top five music scenes in the nation, and we even have a Hard Rock Cafe now! (woo-hoo)

Many of the local bands play the same bars on a regular basis, showing fans a good time week after week at their local dives. Bands like Jive Turkey are fun and entertaining, and Chuck Berry (a rock legend who needs

no support) puts on a great show every month in the Duck Room of Blueberry Hill. Vargas Swing plays regular club shows around St. Louis, as do bands like Reggae At Will.

Other local bands don't play regular gigs, but sometimes headline the Galaxy, or open for national bands when they get the chance. Fuse 12, Locash, Big Blue Monkey and Not Waving But Drowning all open for metal and hard-rock bands whenever they get the chance, in between recording sessions for their own albums they are working on.

Supporting bands like these is easy enough, they are good, and nearly anyone would want our city to be represented by these bands. What about the bands that are no good, or that you hate? (Caution: my mean streak will be very apparent in the next few paragraphs) What about a band like Gravity Kills, that already made it huge not only in St. Louis, but nationally? Sorry, but I have to admit that I am ashamed at their achievement. The entire success of Gravity Kills is due to their amazing ability to rip off industrial bands across the board. What's worse is that lead singer Jeff Scheel in an interview a few years back accused Nine Inch Nails and Machines of Loving Grace for making industrial music too mainstream for "underground" bands like Gravity

Kills. Poor guy, he's so misunderstood that he doesn't even realize that his band wouldn't exist without those two bands.

I don't have any animosity towards local bands that have made it, I'm all for The Urge and happy for their fame. Personally, I would rather not see some of our bands make it big. Mesh for example, I almost wish would flounder. I know, The Point loves 'em, so they must be great! This way of thinking must end immediately if we want to see our scene grow. The Point is owned by a larger conglomerate, and it is not financially sound for them to worry about small local bands, unless they have that one magical song that will make a million bucks. Mesh has one song that The Point thinks can make a million bucks, and oddly enough, that song plays like a bad Matchbox 20 rip-off.

I didn't mean to single out any bands, but think of how Detroit must feel, with everyone looking to them as the city that produced Insane Clown Posse. Do we want to become the city that produced Mesh? I hope not. Support local music, unless you feel that it is not worth supporting. Blind following of anything that comes from this town will not accomplish anything.

# St. Louis International film Festival begins Oct. 29 at many local venues

Very soon, a major annual treat for serious film fans is arriving in our area. The Eighth St. Louis International Film Festival begins Oct. 29 and runs through Nov. 7. The festival features over 100 films including foreign films, independent American films (including some from local filmmakers), art films, documentaries, and short films. Last year I was fortunate enough to work as a venue captain for the festival and got to see a lot of their excellent offerings. The festival is generally the St. Louis premier for most of the films, some of which will return to the area throughout the coming year, and it also features world premieres for other films. A large number of excellent foreign films that would otherwise not make it to the St. Louis area are included in the program. Intriguing documentaries that rarely find a venue here, except at Webster University's Film Series,

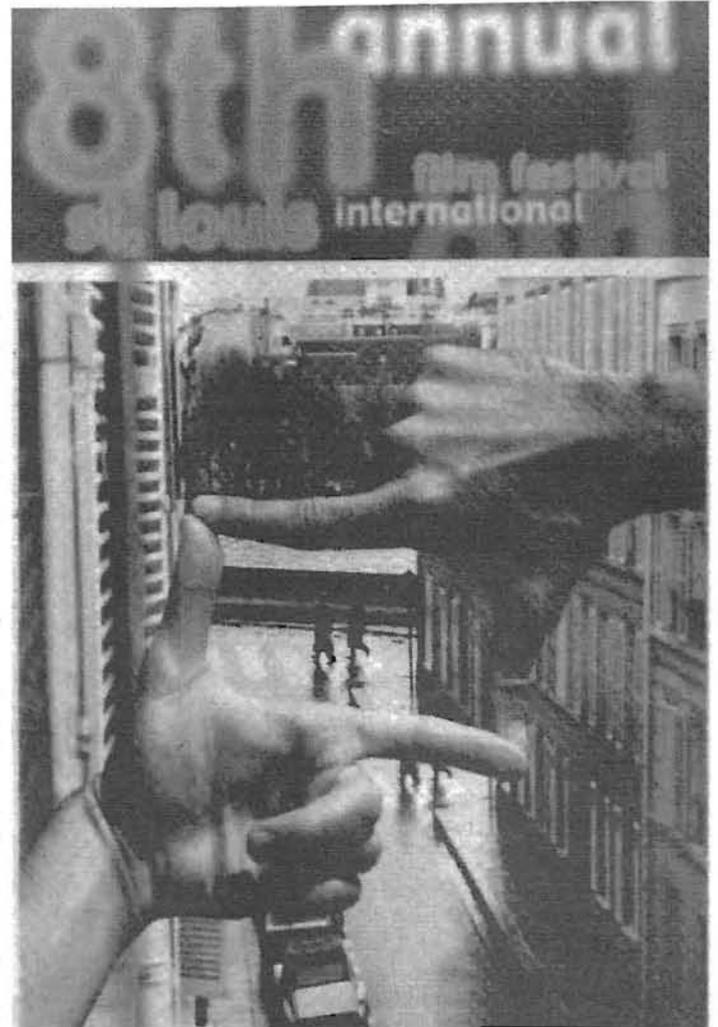
are in the program as well as short films, which are often outstanding and seem to have no other outlet in this area.

I spoke recently with Christine Beshar, one of the Festival organizers. The festival is still finalizing their selection of films for this year, and will be doing a mass mailing of the final choices in about two weeks, according to Beshar. She also said that a complete listing would be posted on their Web page ([www.sliff.org](http://www.sliff.org) - the official St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF) website) at about the same time. The website will also contain descriptions of the films, show times and dates, ticket information, and information about festival events and sidebars. Some of the films already chosen include: Big Brass Ring (a St. Louis film), Genghis Blues, My Best Friend (from legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog), Three Men and a Leg (Italian) and The Wisdom of Crocodiles.

The regular program of films runs at three major venues, with a few showings at some other theaters. The major venues are the Tivoli, Plaza Frontenac, and the West Olive 16. Special groups of films are designated as sidebars, and include discussions, special events and additional screenings. This year's sidebars include African-American cinema (including African-American filmmakers and stars, as well as social and historical contexts of films), Young People's (featuring events to young film fans), and Critics Choice (chosen by

noted local film reviewers). In addition to the films, the festival offers a variety of events and discussion groups, including events with stars (Paul Winfield, Kim Hunter, and others) and filmmakers (George Hickenlooper, Don McKeller, and others whose work is featured). There are panel discussions and coffees with independent filmmakers and with St. Louis filmmakers, workshops for filmmakers, and retrospectives of films.

The whole event is kicked off by a grand opening party at Blueberry Hill the first weekend, "Spin Magazine presents Meet the Filmmakers and Stars". The second weekend features Independent Filmmakers events, with a variety of workshops and discussions. Passes are available at various prices, including a student pass that gives you entry to the panel discussions and a discount on tickets. Individual tickets will also be available, but the discount makes the passes



worthwhile if you'll see more than one film (which you'll want to do!)

**CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER**

## Tricky amazing in concert

It seemed like a quiet night at Mississippi Nights on Wednesday, Sept. 22. 50 or so people waited outside for a show, a small number in comparison to most concerts, with a seemingly tame crowd. Tricky was the performer, out on tour in support of his new album, Juxtapose.

Tricky's new album is phenomenal, groundbreaking, and everything else that has the tendency to scare off the St. Louis listening audience. The crowd was mostly young and of the open-minded persuasion, willing to check out slightly more challenging music than the usual top 40 junk plaguing the airwaves of our radio stations.

Luckily, the crowd eventually filled in at Mississippi Nights, but not until opener Stroke assaulted the small crowd with terribly loud, terrible music. Imagine a bad rip-off of Matchbox 20 or Oasis, so

bad in as to make either of those two bands actually look good in comparison. DJ Genaside 2 spun between sets, basically just mixing songs that fit the mood. DJ Genaside 2 is on Tricky's new label, Durban Poison.

By the time Tricky was ready to take the stage, Mississippi Nights was as full as it was going to get, which was not full capacity, but still a decent sized crowd considering the lack of publicity Tricky received. The trip-hop master doesn't seem to have much influence here in St. Louis.

Lighting was dark, muted red and blue, casting the stage in a dismal light and leaving the diminutive Tricky barely visible in the shadows. The set didn't include a song from his new album until 20 minutes into the show, but the audience didn't seem to mind as Tricky played both hits and lesser known songs

from his other three albums. The cover of Public Enemy's "Black Steel" from Tricky's debut, Maxinquaye, was surprisingly high energy, and filled with all the fear and loathing the musician is known for.

Kioka Williams, a leggy singer with a voice even more beautiful than her body also sang, sometimes backup, sometimes the lead, replacing Tricky's longtime partner Martine Topley-Bird. Surprisingly enough, Williams voice was just as competent singing the songs originally intended for Martine, sometimes even more impressive.

Rapper Mad Dog showed up to perform a couple of songs from "Juxtapose," namely "I Like The Girls," and "Hot Like a Sauna." Mad Dog's hyper speed rap was well delivered and was received, and just as quickly he was off the stage and through with his presentation.

Halfway into "Abbaon Fat Track" the band stopped, Tricky muttered something about a sound problem, wished the crowd a good night, and walked off the stage. No encore ensued, and the audience was asked to vacate the venue. This was not, surprisingly enough, an act of a spoiled rock star wanting to end a set early and pout. Just a couple minutes after the show, Tricky was outside with fans, chatting and signing autographs, joking around and in an overall jovial mood.

Aside from the terrible opening band and the abrupt ending, the show was impressive, but enjoyed by a smaller group than should have been there. Also, a thanks to Mississippi Nights is in order for booking some of the best shows to come through St. Louis in a long time — all in one month.

**CORY BLACKWOOD**

# Chemical Brothers thrill American Theater crowd

The  
Chemical  
Brothers

Who says The Chemical Brothers aren't rock stars? The entire audience at the American Theatre on Sept. 30, and The Chemical Brothers themselves, surely seemed to think they were.

The American Theatre hosted The Chemical Brothers' first show in St. Louis ever, and the crowd turned out in full force to welcome the boys from across the pond. The show started at 8:00 p.m., and none of the flyers mentioned exactly how many openers there were. James Holroyd and All Time High Superstars of Love were the only announced openers, along with more TBA in small letters on the side of all the flyers.

The show opened with a nameless DJ spinning decent but repetitive beats which the few people in attendance generally ignored. After that the crowd was handed a proverbial slap in the face by The Midwest Avengers, a local rap group. The predominantly suburban rave crowd wasn't expecting any rap in the evening's events, but it couldn't be too surprising considering headliners The Chemical Brothers cite Public Enemy as their biggest influence.

The Midwest Avengers strutted on the non-lit stage decked in glowsticks and various jungle costumes, with one of the five rappers wearing a bird mask and hockey shoulder pads.

The first few songs seemed jumbled and disorganized, partly due to the fact that the only lights were pointing towards the audience, and the Avengers kept bumping off each other in their near blindness. As their set went on, their eyes adjusted, and things began to flow a little better. The Midwest Avengers put on a generally rousing show after the first couple of mishaps.

After that, All Time High Superstars of Love, St. Louis took the stage, ablaze in colored lights and strobes galore. The two DJs were clad in silver and wrapped in Christmas lights, and fully aware that no crowd cares to watch two DJs simply spin, they went crazy with the possibilities. A performance artist spoke poetry while dressed in drag with angel wings, and a phenomenal break dancer, Nick Fury showed his stuff. After that, Jerry Falwell's favorite Teletubby, Tinky Winky took the stage and began to dance. It wasn't long before two Mexican Dancers brutally beat him, then dragged him off the stage.

Things went from violent to pseudo-erotic shortly after the Tinky Winky beating. A bondage goddess and catholic school girl danced together, which led to a guy brandishing a whip to join the fray. The whole time, various other costumed people threw goodies from show sponsors Shifty's into the crowd. T-shirts, yo-yos, water bottles and stickers all became missiles in the American Theatre.

All Time High's show was cut short when they crossed the line of decency, and nearly got kicked out. Topless painted women and two barely clad dancers in an inflatable pool seemed too much for the show, even in the 18 and up environment.

Another hour or so was wasted on James Holyrod, a great DJ to play on a CD, but boring and redundant in concert. After the ultra-long intermission, The Chemical Brothers finally took the stage, at a quarter to midnight. There was no trance music here, The Chemical Brothers were all about Block Rockin' Beats at the American.



## THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

**Topless painted women and two barely clad dancers in an inflatable pool seemed too much for the show, even in the 18 and up environment.**

Even after nearly four hours of dance beats (repetitive by nature) the roof nearly collapsed as the crowd ushered The Chemical Brothers in.

Ed Simons and Tom Rowlands wasted no time in getting the floor hopping with "Hey Boy Hey Girl," then jumped straight into "Music: Response," one of their best and most frantic songs to date. Most musicians would wait to towards the end of a show to play their biggest hit, but the duo hit the crowd with "Block Rockin' Beats" by the third song.

After a 40 minute span of hyped up dance anthems, the audience was given a respite with a more mellow song, with the projection screens showing a picturesque sunset. Four minutes later, the break was over, and frenzied dancing resumed.

It didn't take long to convince everyone that these two dorky looking men hiding behind enough equipment to short out nearly any sound-board were truly rock stars. Someone's bra even found its way on-stage, an event normally reserved for Motley Crue or Van Halen! Rowlands and Simons seemed like two hyper-active kids hitting what buttons they could, and eating up the praise thrown their way.

This was the first visit ever from The Chemical Brothers to St. Louis, and with any luck whatsoever, it will not be their last.

**CORY BLACKWOOD**

# Tori Amos' Double-disc is a true treat

Yes, she claims to talk to faeries. And said that Vikings and prostitutes inhabit her mind, but these are just a few reasons why Tori Amos is so genuine. There is her music. When she began as a solo artist in 1991, Tori's Little Earthquakes screamed Kate Bush. A beautiful voice—infusing pop, sex, religion, and rage—accompanied with piano poundings rivaling Bela Bartok and Elton John. As her music progressed, Amos dabbled in other genres—dance, R&B, gospel—but with 1998's *From the Choirgirl Hotel*, her most accessible and probably best album, she helped define modern rock.

With her new double-disc, *To Venus and Back*, Tori gives us a delicious sampling of studio and live tracks. On the first disc, *Venus Orbiting*, there are eleven new songs. Some are beautiful the ballad "1000 Oceans" or haunting, "Bliss," an examination of father-daughter relationships. Others are fun, "Glory of the 80's," where Tori sings, "I'll clone myself like that blonde chick that sings Bette Davis Eyes," or down-right disturbing, "Juarez" recalls a slaughtering of young women in a Mexican desert ("Just 'cause the desert likes young girls flesh."). Several tracks refer to her more experimental, electronic-pumped music, think the sexually-girl-powered anthem "Raspberry Swirl" from *Choirgirl*. Don't worry, friends, Tori still kicks ass on the piano, like on "Datura," where keys splatter and tinkle beneath Amos' operatic pitches and spoken words. No song on *Venus Orbiting* is laden with ennui. In fact, Tori's breathy voice has

'To Venus and Back'  
Label: Atlantic  
Our opinion: \*\*\*\*1/2

never been stronger or sexier. But if you're expecting fey harpsichords and wheezing, abundant on 96's *Boys for Pele*, I'm not sorry to say their gone.

The second disc, *Venus Still Orbiting*, features live cuts. These thirteen songs are already available with Tori and her piano, so it's incredibly interesting to hear tracks like "Sugar" backed with a full band. Next to Ani DiFranco, Amos gives one of the best lives shows around, which is why *Venus Still Orbiting* is so vital. Not only does it document Amos' unbelievable live performances, but also the dedication of her fans. *Venus Still Orbiting* digs onto the evolution of a diva, from piano-accompaniment to experimental, full band sounds. Diving heavily into her first few discs, Amos delivers a gorgeous rendition of "Cooling," never before available on CD; a delicious ninety-second, name-dropping waltz, "Mr. Zebra;" a smooth, energetic version of "Cruel;" and an altered-state of "Cornflake Girl."

It's so difficult to describe the music of Tori Amos, it's not rock, it sure as hell isn't pop. To paraphrase Popeye, "It is what it is." I could make comparisons to Beth Orton, PJ Harvey, Rufus Wainwright, Bjork, or Radiohead, but the only attribute these artists share with Tori are innovative musical natures. Ultimately, Tori Amos is an original, a true goddess of music.

ROB PEERY



Tori Amos

## Music and movies have been great this year, so far

With nine months of 1999 down, we can safely say that 1999 has been a great year for entertainment. With the majority of TV premieres and major CD releases out, all we must do is await the Oscar buzz for the Winter films. But don't wait long friends, it's already begun with *American Beauty* (one word, spectacular):

*Eyes Wide Shut*

Stanley Kubrick's psychosexual date movie, with Nicole Kidman giving a wonderful performance as the lustful, sexually-frustrated Alice.

Beth Orton, "Stolen Car"

The sweet sound of pity and envy from one of Britain's premiere musicians, set to Ben Harper's roaring guitar. Perfect for driving with the windows down on a cool afternoon.

*Wild Wild West* tanks.

A reported \$120 million project with box office intakes of \$110 million. Not even a Will Smith anthem could save this bomb.

Nine Inch Nails,—The Fragile Finally.

The Blair Witch Project

Raking in more than 100 times its budget, the psychological thriller will be on video in time for Halloween. Note to Jan DeBont: Blair Witch is everything *The Haunting* wasn't: Good.

South Park: Bigger, Longer, Uncut

An Oscar-caliber score, the strongest anti-censorship message in recent history. And, yes, I too blame Canada.

*Election*

A high-school movie portraying teens as what they are: manipulative, smart, and driven. With a cunning, scene-styling performance from Reese Witherspoon. Forget *Cruel Intentions*, Reese as Tracy Flick—a shameless, Student Government President-wannabe—is the real deal.

"The Family Guy"

Obscure 70's references, something to offend everyone, and Stewie—that adorable British-accented toddler hell-bent on world domination. Stewie after his mother sits a plate of steamed broccoli before him: "It's better than sex!"

*Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*

If any film could kick *Star Wars* out of Number One, it had to be this one. Better than the original with Heather Graham's rising star as Felicity Shagwell, "Shagwell by name, shag VERY well by reputation."

Macy Gray...On How Life Is Hip-hop, R&B, Jazz, Pop, Hope, Life, Death, Longing. Finally, someone talented enough to deserve Billie Holiday comparisons.

Cibo Matto-StereoType A

What's up, B? Wasubi. As innovative as the Beastie Boys, there are fewer food references and less rapping in French and Italian than in their awesome debut *Viva! La Woman*, but no one can do it like Miho and Yuka can.

Tori Amos—*To Venus and Back*

Bold, original, and individual. Thank God she returned to remind us there is a sexier, smarter, more talented alternative to Lolitas like Britney and Christina.

Run Lola Run

Sliding Doors on acid, cooler and trippier than *Trainspotting*. The best German export since Katarina Witt.

Tori Spelling in *Trick*: No, it's not a misprint. Aaron's little girl

delivers a delicious, hilarious, scene-stealing performance. If there is a God, he'll deliver Oscar nods to Tori and Reese Witherspoon (in *Election*, of course).

"The Boondocks"

A contemporary look at racial differences that makes you laugh until it's hurts. The anti-Family Circus, it's real and hilarious.

Elliot Smith, Rufus Wainwright, and Les Nubians:

The best kept secrets of 1998. Three obscure artists that will never be accepted by the mainstream: a coffeehouse performer with a beautiful voice; a self-declared "opera-queen" tickling the



Cibo Matto

ivories and doing Gap ads; and two French Erykah Badus.

Jay-Z

Jigga Who? Jigga What?!!!!

American Pie

Yes, it was Porky's in 98, but you laughed too. With Allyson Hannigan (as band nerd Michelle) delivering a soon to be classic 90's film line. Better than "Show me the money" or "Do I make you horny, baby?"; it springs out of nowhere: "One time, at band camp, I stuck my flute in my..."

ROB PEERY

# Three Kings takes realistic look Gulf War

Three Kings  
Our Opinion: \*\*\*\*  
Rated R, 115 minutes

Of course, someone would make a film about the Gulf War eventually. I didn't have high expectations for this film when I went to see it. I expected a simple action/adventure film with a lot of humor mixed in, where most of the entertainment is in seeing incredibly large explosions, unbelievably close calls, and impossible stunts. While there is plenty of action and humor, it has a more realistic and serious side that took me by surprise. In stead of the expected platitudes and pat answers, this film really does say something about what happened in that war and how it effected the Iraqi people.

The film opens at the end of the war. The soldiers are almost idle, bored, picking up Iraqi army stranglers. While strip searching all the captive soldiers, three American soldiers (Mark Wahlberg, Spike Jonze, and Ice Cube) discover a map hidden in a very personal place on one of the Iraqi soldiers. Realizing that a map hidden in such a way must have some very valuable information, they sneak off to look at it before turning it over to their commanding officer. Right away the talk is of gold, because they know that the bullion the Iraqi took from Kuwait has not been found. While they are examining the map, they are discovered by a Special Forces captain (George Clooney), a man with a cynical

attitude and due to retire in a few weeks, who had heard a rumor about the map and had the same thought about gold. They form a plan to set out the next morning, tell know one about the map, grab the gold, and be back by noon.

Of course, a lot of this plan doesn't go as they expect. Writer/director David Russell (whose previous films include "Spanking the Monkey" and "Flirting with Disaster") did extensive research on the war and uses a very intense visual technique to tell his story, and to show the audience, along with the characters, that nothing is as simple as they thought. Very creative cinematography gives this film an unusual look. When the soldiers are alone in the desert, an overexposed look is used to convey the stark brightness and heat of the landscape, causing the audience to almost squint along with actors, and feel their isolation and powerless against the harsh environment. When the soldiers enter the Iraqi village, they can move through the town almost as if they don't exist while the Iraqi soldiers terrorize their own citizens. When they enter the bunkers in search of gold, they find room after room filled with consumer goods - TVs stacked



George Clooney, Ice Cube and Mark Wahlberg star in Gulf War based 'Three Kings'.

to the ceiling, boxes filled with cell phones, piles of folded new Levis. The effect is as disturbing to the audience as to the characters, and allows us to know what they are feeling.

It appears that the filmmakers were going for a different kind of movie, somewhere between M\*A\*S\*H and Lawrence of Arabia, but I don't think they quite made it. They did however make a very enjoyable movie, one which is much better than others of this type and which I would

recommend.

(Now playing at the Chase Park Plaza, Esquire, and other theaters)

**CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER**

# American Beauty is a complete package

*Oscar awards expected*

American Beauty  
Our Opinion: \*\*\*\*1/2  
Rated R, 115 minutes



Kevin Spacey and Annette Benning start in 'American Beauty' a film about the last year of a mans life.

"American Beauty" is a variety of rose, noted for its large beautiful blooms of a stunning blood-red color. In the film of that name, Lester Burnham's wife grows these roses in their yard along their white picket fence. The flowers are seen throughout their home in clear glass vases that compliment the home's perfect but coldly impersonal decor and the red blooms reoccur throughout the film. The blood-red roses and the suburban perfection of the home are foreshadowing and we soon see that "American Beauty" has many meanings in this film.

The movie opens with voice-over narration by the central character, Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey), who tells us that this is the story of the last year of his life. He is a middle-aged man with a wife Carolyn (Annette Bening) and teenage daughter Jane (Thora Birch) and a very empty life. Everyone seems to regard him as a dolt, including his wife and daughter, who are also alienated from each other as well. Two events then occur that bring about changes in all of their lives. At a high school basketball game while watching his cheerleader daughter's routine, he becomes smitten with another cheerleader, a blonde

haired beauty and his daughter's friend, Angela (Mena Surari). The other event is the arrival of new neighbors a couple with a teenage son, a strange seeming boy who is always video taping everything around him. These events set the changes in motion, and you may think you know what will happen but in this film, nothing and no one is quite what they seem. Much of the film is funny and some of it is disturbing. The cinematography and imagery create an intensely visual experience. The acting is outstanding, with Annette Bening's performance as the driven but uncomprehending wife and Kevin Spacey's character's transformation from powerlessness to rediscovery of self as standouts.

This film is sure to be in the running for the Oscars and other end-of-year awards, although I don't think this is a film everyone will like. This is not a feel-good movie, sometimes disturbing, but a film to make you think.

(Now at the Chase Park Plaza, new Creve Coeur 12, and other theaters)

**CATHERINE MARQUIS-HOMEYER**

## Lighthearted beats with French political songs make up Stereolab

Cobra and Phases Group Play Voltage in the Milky Night  
Label: Elektra  
Our Rating: \*\*\*

Keeping their pace of one new album a year, Stereolab offers us "Cobra and Phases Group Play Voltage in the Milky Night." A weird name for a weird album, as usual. This album lacks the genius of previous albums like

"Dots and Loops" or "Emperor Tomato Ketchup," but it still has the euphoric feel of classic Stereolab. If nonsensical lyrics set to a fun, lighthearted beat are what you desire, look no further than "Cobra and Phases." Want to be let in on a small secret? Most of Stereolab's lyrics are actually French political songs. With that in mind, enjoy it just the same, because you won't understand it anyway.

**CORY BLACKWOOD**



Stereolab

## Lost Boyz face life after death

'LB IV Life'  
Label: Universil  
Our Rating: \*\*\* 1/2

1999 hasn't been a good year for The Lost Boyz. Earlier this year they lost the foundation of their group when Freaky Tah was murdered.

The group rebounded well and 'LB IV Life' is dedicated to the memory of their fallen friend.

The disc isn't the run of the mill LB disc. They thug it up a little more, and party a little less. Overall still a classic disc.

**KEN DUNKIN**

## Dope doesn't create anything new on their new release

Felons and Revolutionaries  
Epic/Flip  
Our Rating: \*\* 1/2

The new-metal wave may have finally reached its zenith. Bands are being churned out by the day, and the sounds are starting to blend together. Dope doesn't break any new boundaries with "Felons and Revolutionaries."

but they sure are angry. "Sick" is the first single, and a pretty good song, but not really anything special. Nothing on the album is bad, but nothing stands out as being very good. Simply put, it's all been done before, and much of it has been done better. That said the CD sounds like it is a little limiting for the band.

**CORY BLACKWOOD**

## Lennon returns on best disc of second career

Photograph Smile  
Label: Fuel 2000  
Our opinion: \*\*\*\*

Being the son of a former Beatle is hard enough. Being an artist of the 80's attempting to make a comeback is even tougher.

Julian Lennon burst onto the music scene in the mid-80's with his single "Much to Late" which catapulted him to the top of the charts. He released several more lackluster discs which eventually spelled the end of music career.

After taking several years off he recorded "Photograph Smile", his best disc ever. Lennon begins where his father left off with tracks such as "How many times" which could have been recorded for his father's last disc "Milk and honey". The resemblance is almost uncanny.

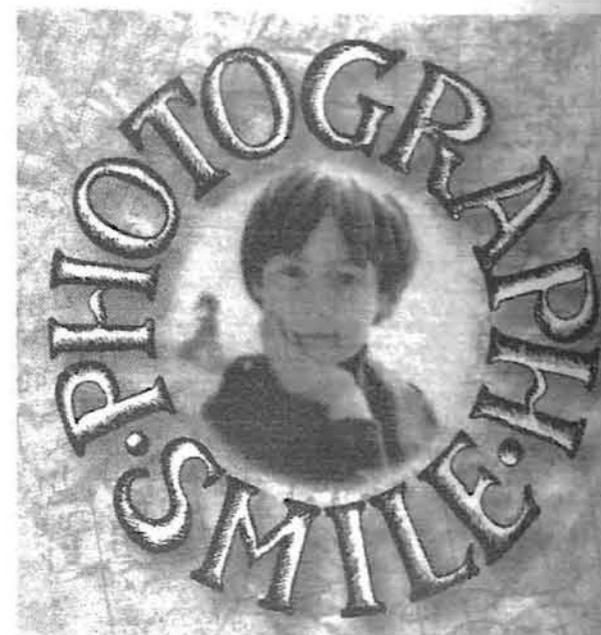
Lennon stars on tracks such as the mellow "Day after day" which shows off his skills as a singer. The song is pretty bouncy and the mellow guitar and beats only help to prove Lennon is back on top.

He also recorded the very Beatle-esque "I Don't Want to

Know" which is the true gem on the disc. The video is hilarious as it has Beatle impersonators running through the streets. A Yoko Ono looking woman hops out of a closets and begins to go crazy in the direction of the Lennon impersonator.

The disc may have fallen by the wayside with radio stations but don't be fooled. This disc is a classic and definitely not one to miss.

**KEN DUNKIN**



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