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Mexico**

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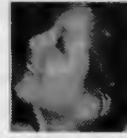
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opens for Punk
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Old Gym: Reloaded

by Christine Neumann

Students patch and paint the old gym

Fact: The Old Gym will be re-opened next fall and will continue to be here for the students for at least, at least, three years. How can you rebuild?

Since April 12, when our precious Old Gym became a quarantined crime scene, students have met with Erin Cannan several times to assess the future of the Old Gym. The poorly attended open forum that took place in Kline Commons on April 15 to address these issues and ideas was poorly managed. We kept tripping over the "whys" and "how coulds" of the situation and made no significant progress. The Old Gym working group, scheduled to meet on Wednesdays at five, promised a better option. The working group, recently created in response to the April 12 burning, is working to help restore and revitalize the Old Gym. Erin, with Baby Aiden in tow, met with us on April 23 in the Root

Cellar to begin discussing Project Rebirth.

I have to admit that there were even fewer people present at this meeting than the one the week before, but this meeting proved much more efficient. It was honest, focused and straightforward because of its smaller size and obvious commitment.

First point on the agenda coincided with points made at the Kline Forum; Erin raised the issue of Community Awareness. Obviously, the first and foremost dilemma of Project Rebirth is how to impress a new mindset on students who may not consider the Old Gym a valuable space. How can students be expected to respect the Old Gym when their Tour Guide passes it by or denounces it as a condemned building?

Secondly, in response to rumors of "structural damage", we discussed composing Work Groups of both faculty and students that would



Johnny Class and Free Presser Christine Neumann trim the edges outside the red room

help repair the building's physical damages. Clarification: There is no structural damage. The burn from the mattress did not make

the floor less sturdy. The frame of the building is also reliable. Finally, in order to get the Red Room and the Old Gym open

by next semester, certain steps such as safety precautions, responsibility issues, and party

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MP3 File Sharing Threatened on Bard Campus

by Tosh Chiang

According to Dave Maswick, associate dean of



information services, the college's ability to protect students sharing illegally traded mp3 files may face serious challenges. The Recording Industry of America (RIAA) recently won a lawsuit in which Verizon, an internet provider, attempted to protect the anonymity of one of its MP3 trading users. The judge claimed that the ruling was in accordance with the Digital Millennium Copyright act—an act which in this case was used

to null a user's constitutional right to privacy.

In another case RIAA charged several students with a \$150,000 dollar lawsuit for operating file-sharing programs which transferred copyrighted material. The students settled outside of court and paid \$12,000 to 15,000 dollars.

RIAA has been on the warpath ever since its persecution of Napster in the late 90's. Their newest campaign involves IRC

and file sharing programs which have chat features. Similar to aim instant messenger, the chat function can be used for user to user communication. RIAA will now be "policing" these programs and sending threatening legal-worded chat messages. Dave Maswick commented that RIAA affiliates such as Sony have contacted him as to the sharing of copyrighted material on the Bard network. Previously he would send an email to the user kindly

asking him/her to remove the mp3 from the system. But as RIAA wins more lawsuits and ups the heat, Maswick is unsure as to how the college can respond to RIAA. Some of you may remember a few weekends back when the Bard network was unresponsive if not inoperative; apparently a program barring the transfer of mp3's via html was being tested. One aspect of our Bard network is constant upgrades, and with that, new measures of security.

"Seniors to Seniors" Award Winners

source: Bard College Press Office

On May 13 five Bard seniors, recipients of the first series of awards, will present summaries of their Senior Projects at a high tea.

The Lifetime Learning Institute at Bard College has established an annual prize, Seniors to Seniors, to support the work of deserving Bard students engaged in the preparation of their senior projects. Five Bard students--from each of the four Divisions of the College and one from the Continuing Studies Program--will receive an award of up to \$500. On Tuesday, May 13, the five Bard seniors selected will present a summary of their projects during a "seniors-to-seniors" high tea, presented by the Lifetime Learning Institute, the dean of the college, and the emeritus dean of the college, in the multipurpose room of the Bertelsmann Campus Center from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The recipients of the

2003 awards are Nili Chernikoff for a photographic study: "Flickerings: The Jewish Lower East Side Today"; Raimondo Chiari, who spent time in Turkey appraising the effect of Turkey's entrance into the European Union on the Kurds: "The Sword and the Shadows: Regionalism and Identity in the Struggle for New Dimensions of Space"; Angela Edman, who studied the International Criminal Tribunal at the Hague: "The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic"; Emma Ferguson, whose interest in Spanish immigration took her to Ecuador to examine the Latin American connection with Spain: "Bilateral Agreements As a Path to Immigration Control"; and Onnesha Roychoudhuri (who is expected to graduate in December 2003), who traveled to Cuba to examine the effects of tourism on the economic and social fabric of Cuban life: "The Effects of Tourism As a Tool for Economic

Development in Cuba."

The dean of the college, Michèle D. Dominy, and the emeritus dean, Stuart Stritzler-Levine, reviewed the proposals and in consultation with the students' senior project advisers and faculty members decided on the five awards based on merit and demonstrated need. These awards fund projects that would not be possible without financial assistance.

The Lifetime Learning Institute provides opportunities for active retired persons to share their love of learning in a setting that fosters the exchange of ideas and experiences. The Institute is part of the Elderhostel Institute Network and offers noncredit, noncompetitive courses taught by volunteers on the Bard College campus.

B & G Takes Ludlow

by Gus Feldman and Jase Miles-Perez

On Tuesday May 6th, a delegation of around 40 people gathered to rally in support of B&G employees' campaign for affordable family healthcare.

The participants, mostly comprised of students, B&G workers, and union representatives, marched through the campus displaying enthusiastic dissent towards the college's current labor policies.

Equipped with signs, banners, drums, and chants, the rally brought a welcomed disruption to Bard's routine serenity. The demonstration commenced at Kline with speeches from different B&G employees and union representatives. From

there, the participants vigorously marched towards the Campus Center reciting chants such as, "Money for workers, not for foil" and "1,2,3,4, Bard makes its workers poor."

Moving from the Campus Center, the rally convened in front of Olin where it met students getting out of their 11:30 classes. In order to encourage people to join the rally, participants began to chant "B&G gets screwed yo, march with us to Ludlow." After joining up with a sizable addition of students, the rally stormed into Ludlow. Also in attendance was a cameraman from a local news outfit.

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The Free Press would like to apologize for the misrepresentation of Kiernan Rok's article in the April 29th Issue of the Free Press. We wish him all the best luck on the student judiciary board next semester.

Chiapas: the aftermath of Acteal

by Anna Mojallali *Rebuilding a Struggling Population*

Elena Perez Jimenez is timid when speaking about the women's cooperative in Acteal, Mexico, but what she helped to initiate has provided an income, skills and confidence for indigenous women all over the highlands of Chiapas—Mexico southern-most state.

Elena now helps manage a cooperative that produces traditional clothing sold independently from Mexico to Norway. Because Elena lost her husband and father, her means of support, in 1997 to a massacre by the paramilitary, she was forced to search for an alternative way to provide food and clothing for herself and her children.

Other collectives like this one have been developing in Acteal, and the rest of Chiapas, despite the efforts of the Mexican government to discourage and dissolve them. Since the 1994 Zapatista uprising, communities like Acteal

have been adamant in their move towards indigenous autonomy. They have created

development projects such as the women's collective, and have returned to traditional political practices; a shift that has angered the Mexican government because, the Zapatistas claim, it wishes to use the natural resources in Chiapas for economic development. Consequently, presidents Zedillo and Fox may have

helped to fund and train paramilitary groups that displace and occasionally massacre Zapatista sympathizers.

The worst act of violence occurred in Acteal three days before Christmas in 1997. Those who survived the massacre, like Acteal's spokesman Javier Luiz Perez, recall heavily armed paramilitaries in black uniforms who encircled the church where peaceful civilians were gathered in a three-day fast and prayer.

The paramilitaries opened fire, scarring the unpainted walls of the chapel, and then pursued the fleeing villagers. Over the next five hours, the troops mutilated the 45 civilians with machetes and cut babies out of the wombs of five pregnant women.

The massacre on Acteal was part of the low-scale warfare that the Mexican military has been waging against indigenous civilians in Chiapas. In 1994 the Zapatistas, a group of indigenous campesinos, carried out an armed insurrection against the Mexican government. Two years later, the Zapatistas and the Mexican government signed the San Andres accords, which included

two key Zapatista demands: the official recognition of the right of indigenous communities to govern themselves, and the freedom to control the natural resources in their territories. Zapatista spokesman Subcomandante Marcos believes that these accords have not been implemented or enforced, and Zapatistas and their

attack. According to spokesmen for Las Abejas and the Zapatistas, these groups function as direct democracies, and they do not recognize Mexico's political or judicial systems. Important decisions within each community are made through consensus, a process in which each community member age 12 or older has a



supporters have refused to resume dialogue with the Mexican government until they are fulfilled.

According to the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), logging and oil corporations have lobbied the Mexican government to ignore the San Andres Accords, in order to maintain their access to the state's hardwood, hydroelectric potential, and oil resources.

Unlike other indigenous groups in the Chiapas region, Acteal agrees with the goals, but not the violent means of the Zapatistas. Acteal is member of a political organization called Las Abejas [The Bees] that includes thirty-six communities in Chiapas. Las Abejas has been committed

to peace and justice since 1992, and its members work collectively to provide honey for all people, according to Las Abejas secretary Javier Luiz Perez. Las Abejas and the Zapatistas demand fair trials, land reform, an end to privatization and NAFTA (North American

Free Trade Agreement) and the exploitation of natural resources in Chiapas. In 1994, during the Zapatista uprising, Las Abejas remained neutral, believing a peaceful solution could be achieved through dialogue "by using words and prayer, not the sword," according to Lorenzo Perez Arias, president of Las Abejas. What hurt most after the massacre, said Perez, was that we never provoked them [the paramilitary forces] to cause this

voice. One such decision was the banning of alcohol because of its links to domestic abuse, a practice that Ryan Zinn, the Chiapas coordinator for Global Exchange, a San Francisco based social justice organization, explains has held up in some communities but not all. Consensus based decisions can take months to be

reached. The San Andres Accords required nearly a year to finalize because each community representative from the negotiating body had to return to his or her community to report back that week's process. In turn, every community came to consensus on how the representative would approach the next step of the negotiations. "When my group wanted to visit one community," said a member of a Mexico Solidarity Network delegation, "we had to wait for over two hours while they came to a consensus on whether we could enter."

The Zapatistas have taken political autonomy a step further by forming five autonomous zones throughout the state. Ruled strictly by Zapatistas, the autonomous zones do not permit the entrance of Mexican government and military officials, and they screen civilians, sometimes requiring them to bring a letter

of recommendation from a social justice organization. The zones are centers for indigenous peoples living in the surrounding communities, where they can receive education, health care, and take part in initiatives such as the "Native Corn Project," which attempts to protect some of Mexico's original corn strains from genetic modification. These zones are bright with political murals of figures such as Emiliano Zapata and Che Guevara, and they overlook dramatic mountain vistas.

Through autonomy, indigenous peoples are attempting

to reclaim the natural resources in Chiapas, the second most biodiverse region in the Western hemisphere. According to ACERCA (Action for Community and Ecology in the Regions of Central America), indigenous peoples inhabiting Chiapas use the land in a

sustainable manner, but the government claims they are destroying the rain forest through slash and burn agriculture. "A lot of American corporations want to displace indigenous communities," said Brendan Mitchell from ACERCA, "so they can use the land for their profit. They justify this by saying the campesinos are killing the rainforest."

Whatever its motivations, in 1997, the Mexican government began funding the creation of indigenous paramilitary groups in Chiapas. Leaders of the paramilitary group MIRA, "Anti-Zapatista Indigenous Resistance Movement," receive \$1,250 a month from the state government, a huge incentive in a region where campesinos are lucky to make three dollars a day. They also

receive arms and training from the military and public-security officers, who use psychological manipulation tactics. According to Ryan Zinn, teenage boys are lured in by the military through sports, drugs, and pornography.

"On the first day, they [military officers] invite the local boys over to play basketball and drink a coke. The next day it's a beer. After that they're smoking joints and using psychedelics, and at the same time watching hard-core pornography and violent army flicks," he says.

According to Perez, "the military and government helped create the paramilitary to finish off the Zapatistas and Abejas." Perez stated that "the paramilitary are indigenous pawns in support of PRI," Mexico's majority party that ruled the country for 71 years.

In response to the massacre in Acteal, the Mexican government presented the violence as a tribal conflict among indigenous peoples. "The Indians should resolve their own problems," Homero Tovilla, the former secretary of government under the Chiapas governor, is reported to have said during a November meeting.

However, the government are involved in some Chiapas communities.

In the "PRIista" towns, government workers provide running water and electricity, while army programs give free haircuts and dental care. Zapatistas

contend that these initiatives are actually intended to gather information on the Zapatistas, and that the building of roads through regions where no local people own cars will only allow the army further access into the region. According to Ryan Zinn, the PRIistas suffer from the army's introduction of alcohol and prostitution into their communities, and from their increased dependence on government aid.

Because Zapatista and Abejas communities have refused government handouts, calling them an effort to buy off the indigenous people while keeping them in poverty, they have created their own development projects, such as Elena's women's collective. Another initiative, called Bikes for Chiapas, hopes to provide used bicycles to teachers and health care providers to ensure fast transportation from their homes to the autonomous zones. Other projects range from building secondary schools to starting small boot factories.

Acteal's other initiative is its coffee cooperative. Along with 630 families from neighboring

communities, men from Acteal created this cooperative in 1998. Calling themselves Maya Vinik (Mayan men in Tzotzil), they sell their coffee to fair trade organizations in Mexico, the United States, and Switzerland, in order to avoid working through middle men who pay two dollars per kilo of unroasted coffee. These men work among the wafting scents of their labor, as well as the coffee plants growing up the hillsides and the blue tarps spread on the roadside and covered in drying coffee beans, a spreading symbol of indigenous initiatives for self-subsistence.

Among these tarps plays Efrain, a seven-year-old child who bears a scar on his chin from a bullet that nearly took his life in 1997. After the massacre he was mute for two years. He lost his parents to the paramilitary, and has been raised by his uncle. Five years later, he is an inquisitive and communicative child, kicking a deflated soccer ball out of a garbage filled ditch. With the guidance of community leaders like Elena Perez Jimenez, he will soon be responsible for carrying on the resistance of the indigenous people of Chiapas.

[military officers] invite the local boys over to play basketball and drink a coke. The next day it's a beer. After that they're smoking joints and using psychedelics, and at the same time watching hard-core pornography and violent army flicks

Through autonomy, indigenous peoples are attempting to reclaim the natural resources in Chiapas

Regime Change in New Paltz

by Matt Dineen

We used to joke about running for mayor of Tivoli. But what if a Bard student actually did become mayor or win some other local office? A current student or recent alumnus would be guaranteed the Bard vote and may even win the election if enough students mobilized. This could potentially have a dramatic effect on local politics.

Last week, a similar scenario emerged in New Paltz. On Tuesday May 6th, the nearby village held its elections for mayor and board of trustees and the historic results were shaped, in part, by the mobilization of students from SUNY New Paltz.

The town's incumbent mayor of 16 years Thomas Nyquist, 71, was defeated by Jason West, 26, a former SUNY student, activist and New Paltz resident for nearly a decade. West is also a registered Green Party member who had ran two previous campaigns for state assembly without success. However, in this non-partisan election he was joined by fellow Green and community activist Rebecca Rotzler, 41, and Julia Walsh, 23, a current SUNY student to make up the Innovation Party ticket. On May 6th, Rotzler and Walsh both won as well, becoming the town's new trustees.

This Innovation campaign has taken over New Paltz and gained national news coverage.

The stated goal of the now-victorious campaign is: "To transform New Paltz into an environmentally sustainable community, to bring REAL democracy to village hall and to work to bring the SUNY New Paltz campus, Town and Village together." West, Rotzler, and Walsh, who will be officially sworn in to office on June 1st, have pledged to: "Install solar panels on village hall, use artificial wet lands for a part of the water treatment facility, use biodiesel fuel in the Department of Public Works trucks, create internship opportunities in Village government for SUNY students, and fight sprawl and defend open space." Essentially, they want New Paltz to be a more democratic and ecologically conscious town.

As the name suggests, the Innovation trio truly represented a progressive alternative to the existing government in New Paltz. Mayor-elect West described the incumbent Nyquist and long-time trustee Robert Feldman, who was also running for mayor, as moderate politicians who were "anti-student" and more

sympathetic to property owners than to tenants, and working people in general, in the village. This was apparent in their bitter reactions to the election results. "None of them have experience in human resources, none have experience in capital budgets, purchasing or management," Feldman decried to the Daily Freeman. He continued, "It's hard for me not to sound bitter, but I'm very sad today. I truly do not believe New Paltz will be the same community based on what's happening here."

After the election incumbent mayor Nyquist read a prepared statement lambasting the Innovation campaign's affiliation with the Green Party and what he sees as their manipulation of SUNY New Paltz students. He explained: "They were spoilers in the (2000) presidential election, and now they have used students, most of whom are ill-informed on New Paltz community issues, to get themselves elected." Nyquist, along with some local residents, believes that college students should not have the right to vote since they are an inherently transient population. Moreover, he thinks that West, Rotzler and Walsh, "have set a precedent of

students determining who will provide the leadership of our community."

This sentiment was recently echoed by a New Paltz resident named John Kenney upset with the recent election who in a letter to the Daily Freeman asserted that since students "aren't raising families and don't face every day issues" they should not have the right to vote in the matters that affect the village.

But as some SUNY students pointed out in wake of this upheaval, they do have a right to vote in their place of residence, which is where they attend college for most of the year and some, like West, settle down there after they graduate. "I live here year-round," said SUNY New Paltz student Megan Thompson, 19. "Even if I did leave, it would only be for a month-and-a-half." She thinks that the incumbent Nyquist is just "pissed" because he simply could not get the student vote. Thompson and other students think it is unfair that they have been portrayed as "second-class citizens" since the election.

This has been a divisive political issue around the country, including right here in Dutchess County. Until 2000, college students in this

county did not have the right to vote until a group of activists from Bard and Vassar pressured the corrupt and conservative voting board and other local politicians. After months of hard work, college students in Dutchess County were allowed to vote in the 2000 elections.

We still have the right to vote and the recent events in New Paltz have proven that we have the power to really affect things on a local level. On May 6th only 25 percent of the nearly 4,000 registered voters came out to the polls to determine the election of New Paltz's mayor and board of trustees. With less than 400 votes each, Jason West, Rebecca Rotzler, and Julia Walsh won a majority. This illustrates the importance of voting in local elections. The Innovation regime is now in a position to make some positive changes in the village and serve as an example of progressive politics in action.

For more information visit www.innovationcampaign.org

Students Fix-up the Old Gym

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parameters must be put into place. Most agreed that the re-opening will have to begin slowly in order to convince the administration of the students' maturity.

Then we began formulating specific ideas:

What would really spawn community support would be if the Old Gym took on more diverse roles in the community. Sure, it's a good party spot, but it would help if there were more regular traffic invested in the space. Diverse events, such as film screenings, mural painting, and rotating photo exhibits would raise interest levels and make the building seem more integral to community and therefore more deserving of respect. Clarification: The Old Gym is on the list for Mellon Grant spaces. This means that one can apply for money to fund an event, any event, and host that event in the Old Gym. Stop by the Dean of Students Office for more information about the Mellon Grant.

We also decided that in order to create a more vibrant atmosphere, some changes to the space would

need to be made. This past weekend, on Saturday May 10, these changes began when about twenty kids started reclaiming and restoring the Old Gym. First it was primer paint, then patch work on the walls, then more painting, mopping, patching, cleaning and more painting. The last of us left after eight o'clock. If you haven't seen the Matt D bounces on the burnt springframe

space you definitely should. The need to create a respectable communal environment led us to envision a new aesthetic for the downstairs. The group decided to paint the walls of the downstairs hallway in solid colors other than white. The idea would be to keep the graffiti

and wall art upstairs in the Gym and to have the downstairs hallway be clear to exhibit visual art or, possibly, to create a new home for



"The Wall." In order to facilitate the idea of keeping the downstairs "graffiti free", sections of the walls in the upstairs gym will be painted white at the beginning of each term to be made available for everyone through out the semester. There was an idea of having a large area

of the back wall of the Gym remain white for video projection. Erin also mentioned possible furniture donations, and the idea of having the upstairs become the new smoking area for the campus after the smoking room in Kline becomes no more. To this end, the Old Gym might even get coffee.

With regard to security measures, the group could only toss around ideas as anything specific will have to be run by the administration. For example, the thefts that have occurred in the audio co-op are a larger issue than the resources available to a student group are equipped to handle. We've seen that changing the lock doesn't cut it. Possible ideas included a regular security check at the end of the night and a lock up around three or four in the morning. A small group of committed students might serve as a safety board - or access list

- that claims responsibility. There could be arrangements made in advance for late night events because this flexible student run system's main goal would be for everyone to have access to the space regardless of time.

Community Awareness. This article was written to provide just that. There are a lot of clubs that depend on the Old Gym such as the Audio Co-op, the Sound Crew, SAC, Entertainment Committee, and Four Square. These clubs would hardly exist without the Old Gym. The Old Gym is a valued student space. It has been widely known for the autonomy and freedom it provides students. It may be the last of its kind, and it's ours - and even if some may think it's a shitty scene - it's ours and it's been here for us whenever we needed to rock out, too drunk to go home, needed to get high or get laid, and whenever we couldn't find anything else to do. It's a landmark of our history (see Matt Dineen's zine "A History of the Old Gym"). It's an icon of our present. Don't let it become just a distant memory.

Students and B&G Rally at Ludlow

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People piled into the old building, standing shoulder to shoulder, rhythmically chanting with persistent energy. Within a couple minutes, Jim Brudvig (Vice President of Administration who is in charge of conducting the collective bargaining process) came down the stairs to observe the rally.

At this point, some of the rally's organizers managed to quiet the crowd in order to present petitions to the office of President Botstien. These petitions, which advocated the college to lower the price of family health care for B&G employees, contained more than 700 signatures. Instead of presenting the petitions to the office of Botstein, Brudvig

intervened and offered to accept the petitions himself.

The rally was unlike any other of that Bard had previously experienced. For the brief ten minutes that the participants occupied Ludlow, members of the Bard community displayed a unification between labor and students that the Administration will not soon forget.



Students and SEIU/B and G workers flood the lobby

SPAC Takes on the Pac *Students unveil student performing arts center*

by Liv Carrow

Rumor has it, even the performers have a problem with the Fisher Performing Arts Center: Elvis Costello and Botstein supposedly shared some rough words onstage when Botstein gave a pretentiously long opening remark. Though Botstein considers himself a musician, he did admit at his open house that he is "slightly authorotarian," and his long, proud introduction for Costello further alienated "the lone prince and his castle" from the soul of music and brought the Center closer to the corporate void it embodies in the popular student mind; an oppressive structure that is undoubtedly not jazz.

On Saturday May 3rd, while Spring Fling events were held to distract students from the Elvis Costello and the Mingus Orchestra concert held in the PAC that evening (which most could not afford), students staged their own entertainment at the SPAC outside the PAC doors.

Dressy middle-agers, students' parents, and the rest of the Hudson Valley upper crust milled around and nervously drove through the crowd of Bard students who gathered to watch the free show, heralded by a huge inflatable hand-constructed bear hanging in front of Manor, which included the Cider Bandits, Mother Ming, The New Reagan, and Field Trip to the Fox Farm. Kids kicked up their dusty heels in the faces of the black-tie attired moneybags who came to enjoy good music for a bad cause.

To educate these poor souls who thought Botstein a philanthropist acting in the best interest of his college, students distributed zines compiled for the event, which included a the PAC Manifesto, the New York Times article about

the PAC opening night protest, a collection of haiku about the PAC, as well as some financial facts and figures which run contrary to all

up for themselves, to play with. The SPAC show was a great time-some PAC employees even came out to watch, as well as numerous

and the Dance departments will move to the PAC beginning next semester, which will mark the only student use (besides employment)

Gehry building, which is no better or bigger than those they use now. Students who lived in Manor were evicted; that dorm is now short a

few rooms which could have been used to house the some 150 plus sophomores who were wait-listed for student housing, and will be plus one café designed to cater to the PAC patrons and employees. The campus is changing fast in favor of this establishment, faster than students can make changes themselves.

The solution, however, lies in the students' ability to organize and work with this system to utilize it for our own interests (see last issue's article by Rafi Rom.) This thing will keep eating the soul of this college unless the college resists.

The SPAC was a step in the right direction; we must continue to insist that this space become ours, or at least that we gain access on student terms (i.e., student performances in the main space, affordable or free admission, student consultation with major decisions, etc.) The PAC isn't going anywhere, but Bard might fall into its asymmetrical shadow.



Ben Dangle's SPAC

Granted it is a frame of 2x4s with aluminum sheeting cheekily wrapped around it, big enough for about four people to stand under, but it is a powerful symbol of the disparity between the shiny toys Botstein reserves for his ranks and the gnawed-on wooden blocks students are given

that has thus been proclaimed about the PAC's low cost and nonexistent impact on the school's normal budget. The SPAC embodies everything that the PAC doesn't. It is student built, student planned, student run and used in the interest of the students. Granted it is a frame of 2x4s with aluminum sheeting cheekily wrapped around it, big enough for about four people to stand under,

Costello fans who stayed to enjoy the hoedown (some of whom even gave their tickets to students in solidarity,) and it represented what Bard kids can and will do in the interest of a good time.

It also represents the fact that we will not succumb to the corporate nature of the shiny beast which landed uninvited in our campus. We will not be bought out, and we will not quietly stand by as we become a tourist attraction, a funny little colony of students who like to make noise and run around naked, attached to the PAC, students that tourists and snobs can gawk at and ask for directions as we walk to class or to dinner. We won't watch as the campus expands beyond its underpaid workers' capabilities to maintain it, as our parking lots fill up with Benzies for concerts we are too broke on tuition to afford.

This is the state of affairs as it stands today, or at least as it stood on the weekend of Spring Fling. The Theater and Drama

that the PAC is available for. Students in these departments will not be able to use the main stage, however. They will have separate facilities and classrooms, which are no bigger or more equipped than Avery is now. Students with classes in the PAC will walk a solid 10 minutes to class to use the



an anti-pac inflatable teddy bear

Post Semester Happenings




Wednesday, May 21st:
Last Day of Classes

Thursday, May 22nd: Baccalaureate Service and Senior Dinner
Non-Graduates must vacate residence dorms

Friday, May 23rd: Senior Tent Party

Saturday, May 24th: Commencement



the free press would to salute the non-graduates of the class 2003

Old Bard, Admissions and I.M. Pei

by **Mary Backlund**

A letter from VP of Student Affairs

I'd like to let you know, before it becomes a nastily distorted rumor, that I have been thinking about redoing the floor in the Admission Office. Actually, I've been thinking about it a long time, but the other day as I was walking through the former dining room, as I have done many times a day over the past several years, I thought to myself, I'm finally going to call B&G and make an appointment with Chuck Simmons to talk about this floor.

You might know that Hopson Cottage is one of the original John Bard estate buildings. Dating from the 1840's, it was the Rectory for the Chapel of the Holy Innocents. It is believed to have been designed by the famous architect A.J. Davis, who is also rumored to have had a hand in the design of the Blithewood Gatehouse. Admissions moved from Ludlow (we were in Dimitri Papadimitrou's office) to the Gatehouse in the early 1980's and on to Hopson Cottage in the late 1990's.

We did not want to leave the Gatehouse for many reasons. First, it is beautiful. Walking up to that building made me smile every day. Second, the hexagonal shape is very distinctive and the

triangles which form it are quite possibly energetically beneficial to all those who enter there. These qualities, coupled with the historic role of a gatehouse, made it a most interesting - and appropriate - admissions office.

But quarters in the hexagon were tight and our need for a larger reception area was pressing. If you haven't, I encourage you to visit the partially subterranean first floor of the Blithewood Gatehouse to fully understand our dilemma. That tiny, oddly shaped room was the admission reception room; visitors usually ended up sitting on the stairs that wind up to the first floor landing! Before conceding that we had to move, we considered digging underground tunnels to annex Gahagan, erecting a huge glass triangular foyer ala the Louvre and I.M. Pei, and even building an enviro-bunker into the hillside facing the now existing community garden. But codes regarding renovations in

an historic district to an historic building are strict; eventually it just seemed more prudent to move.

The connections to the really "old Bard," through era and architect, put Hopson



plans for enviro-bunker on hold

Cottage at the top of our short list of options. Hopson Cottage had been a faculty residence for years. Prof. French had lived in it most recently and a man named Charlie Patrick had preceded her. Charlie Patrick was the athletic director, famous for - among other things - late night poker games held in the kitchen. Several current faculty can tell you tales of those times and you can visit the very kitchen today, looking now just as it did then.

Well, we were just going to re-paint and move in, but a change in the use of a building brings many new regulations to bear. In this case the change from a private residential space to a public space meant there had to be a bathroom accessible to the handicapped. The walls of Hopson Cottage are very, very thick and the location of the existing bathroom, behind these thick walls, made renovations to comply with the OSHA regulations structurally impossible. This fact, combined with some rethinking about the size of a reception room that would carry us into the next millennium, resulted in a decision to build an addition.

John Battle, brother of Prof. Battle, was hired to design the new space to meld with the original 1840's structure. The frustrations and disappointment of having to delay and rethink our long awaited and sorely needed move just to comply with OSHA regulations were replaced with delight as the solution to our space problem resulted in a much

grandier space than we had ever imagined, even when we were thinking glass triangle!

But back to the dining room floor. The old 1840's floor is showing signs of the wear and tear from the daily tread of current and future Bardians. A couple of boards are cracked, some give with a step, pieces of caulking are sucked up by the occasional vacuuming, and the rollers of a computer chair have rubbed away the protective veneer and threaten the soft wood beneath. The time has come to consider what must be done, budget for it and plan for the changes in use and traffic patterns that will inevitably ensue. It will be disruptive, there will be many opinions and options to consider, but this project can't be left untended any longer. But, because this building is "old Bard," really old, it is important to many people for many reasons.

I hesitate to move forward without first consulting the interested members of the Bard community. If you would like to get involved in this project, please contact me.

Note: "old Bard" refers to a mythical place that existed up until the moment you arrived

A Letter to Leon

Dear Leon,

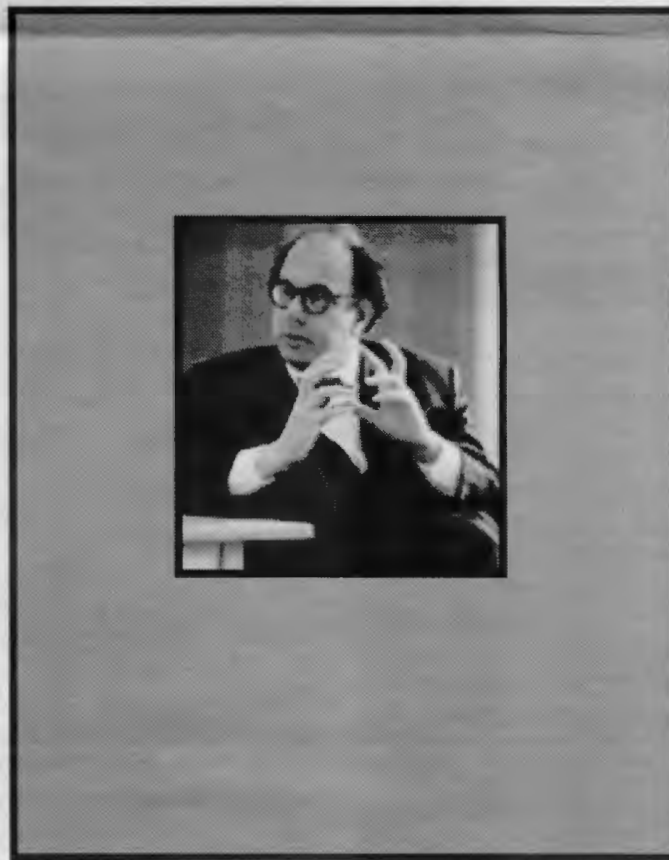
I want to set a couple things straight before I leave. Attending 30 minutes of your open house last week produced volumes of ranting essays on dozens of topics in my head, but I will attempt to restrain myself to a brief letter.

In discussing the dramatic changes that are occurring on campus right now, namely the opening of the performing arts center, you addressed the explosion of student dissent and discontent with the new building. I disagree, and was personally offended, by your condescending assertion that Bard students have always been fundamentally opposed to such change. You suggest that we simply just want things to stay the way we know them and that you have seen this throughout your rule. "When we built Olin, some students refused to attend classes there!" You provided this anecdote as an example of the tradition of hysterical student desire to illogically preserve our status quo.

No Leon, we are not fundamentally opposed to change. We are opposed to changes that we believe, and not illogically (or as you put it: "idiotically"), adversely affect us and this college in general. Do you have no faith in our capacity to make informed decisions about our lives as Bard students? According to a professor that I spoke to about this you treat the Bard faculty the same way. You suggest that they are just as resistant to change as students. This made your logic much more clearer to me. As you admitted yourself at this same open house: you are "slightly authoritarian." We reject your authoritarianism! Beyond having the capacity to have opinions about changes that dramatically affect our lives here we demand the agency to actually participate in these decisions that you have had a virtual monopoly on for over two decades.

There is so much more to say but I will conclude with some thoughts on the Old Gym. We are not "idiotic," as you suggested, for wanting to preserve the most important and historic student space on campus. On the contrary, you are idiotic for making such an offensive claim. Please read the copy of A Student History of the Old Gym that I dropped off in your office in Ludlow. That will give you a better understanding about how important the Old Gym is to students here and how tragic it would be to erase that history. That is all I have to say in this space. Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Matt Dineen



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Staff Picks Edition

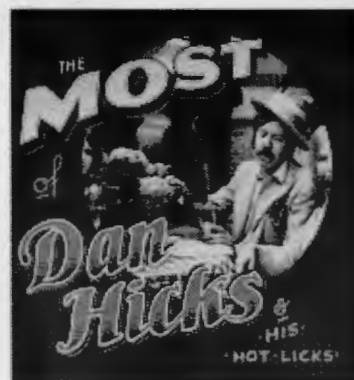


Yo La Tengo Summer Sun Matador

There's no distortion at all but it rocks all the same. Summer Sun kicks you back into a lawn chair and keeps the icy beverage chill and delicious. Spinning beach balls bounce about and wait: there's no distortion?

Indie-rock's Hoboken trio sets about with a flighty jazz-soul sound that keeps the melodies bumpy and the vocals shiny. A first listen to the album is a bit wanting, a bit desirous of something that "puts the rock out." But clearly on the second listen, Ira, Georgia and James ensnare the hearts and ears with melodic gravity—each tune is so simple and crafted. The thing about Yo La Tengo is that every song is sung and mastered in desperation, as though making music is a matter of survival. Their voices are always so full of emotion and so lovely in simplicity. The album intros with a floaty de-structured levity—a somber attempt at getting your attention. "Season of the Shark" later rolls in with that old-fashioned 50's Motown feel. The song has a really chill likableness to it—a feeling of both downheartedness and up-beat happiness.

What makes this and YLT's entire catalogue so good is that the music is simple-honest emotion; everything is set against flowing melodies that explode and implode while keeping that rock going. YLT is good 'cause their music, is like the ticking of their hearts. [tosh chiang]



Dan Hicks The Most Of Sony

I don't know if any music in my collection (or recollection) has more nourishing qualities than

Dan Hicks and his Hot Licks. If you grew up on this stuff like I did; or if you're a later converted fan, you're probably familiar with songs from 1969's "Original Recordings", 1971's "Striking it Rich," or 1973's "Last Train to Hicksville." If you are a newcomer to the sweet sounds of the Hot Licks, or a cheap fan, start simple with the excellent "The Most Of..." (Sony Legacy, 2001) collection, which includes literally the most of the group's hits.

The group has been described as "the cool rag applied to the throbbing temple of 60's rock," and their sound has to this day never been successfully classified. It is probably under the broader heading of "rock," but blues-jazz-country-soul-bluegrass-jug-Broadway fusion is probably more like it.

The tunes are addictive and singing along is mandatory. Dan Hicks can be played at full volume on a road trip, as ambient party tunes, or as inspiration when doing chores or homework. Some of his romantic songs could even be considered material for a make-out mix, like "My Old Timey Baby" or the classic "I Scare Myself." "You Gotta Believe" and "News From Up The Street" are both simple, cute and damn catchy tunes, while "Jukie's Ball" and "By Hook of By Crook" are hopping jazzy tunes fit for dancing.

This music was the soundtrack of all the happy times in my life and continues to be a source of aural joy for me and my friends I play it for. The musicians in Hot Licks are amazingly good; Sid Page rips apart his fiddle a la Grappelli, "Little Johnny" Webber caresses his guitar in memorable solos and swinging riffs, and bassist Jaime Leopold swings the tunes on the bass. The vocals are the highlights of the Hot Licks' music, though; twangy Dan backed by an array of songbirds: Sherry Snow, Maryann Price, Tina Gancher and Nicolee Dukes, all of whom add a different style of vocals. Probably the most fun of their vocal numbers is "Euphonious Whale" from "Last Train...", in which each vocalist makes a different animal noise to create a euphonious wail.

If you like any of the previously mentioned genres of music, even a little bit, check out the Hot Licks. They will lick the inside of your ears in a good way and you won't be able to listen to anything else until some musically ignorant friends make fun of you for listening to country. Even those who don't like Dan Hicks can appreciate the historical value of such a group existing and succeeding through the births of acid rock, free jazz, prog rock,

techno and heavy metal. This is something totally different and totally cool. [liv carrow]



Cradle Of Filth Damnation and a Day Sony

You are a satanic midget from Great Britain. No, shut up you are. You meet Sony in a bar. Sony is Satan, you make-out, awesome! Way to go. In the morning while Sony makes you eggs, you convince them to give you a record contract. Meet Cradle of Filth... Sony signed them, COF beat them up. Sony wanted them to sell out and make a goth version of Dirty Dancing, / COF went out and hired the Budapest Film Orchestra and made a concept album based on an H.P. Lovecraft story, inaccessible to your little brother who wears lipstick and face paint. HA HA!

It's a good way to feel; a lifting orchestral score with the grinding noise in-between to make driving to buy shampoo a damning experience. "Damnation and a Day" makes mundane activities epic ones. And when that doesn't make your day seem to be in order, to cower in the corner of a dark room and glare into an abyss with green glowing eyes, just admire the wonderful digital effects adorning the well earned satanic pretension of their pearly pasty faces. There are the usual big breasted nude women yet there is less blood dripping down from them and they frolic in forests and stand with witch like command. My personal favorites are the inspirational AWWWs of Sarah Jezevel Deva. Her voice is the perfect stereotypical female voice adding a soft edge to the scratching bellows of the Dani Filth.

Dismissing their earlier Iron Maiden on 666 death crack metal, COF ups the goth paint moves beyond the majority of their black metal leanings on this album. At this point in COF's career their old school fans (me) have to accept that they are not going to go back to the glory they achieved on the Vempire, Dusk and Her Embrace,

and Cruelty and the Beast, but for those of us (me) who were able to enjoy the goth sans Goethe of their last full length album Midian, this is a lot fun. Even if you don't like "the metal," COF has always been an anomaly in the scene (they are signed to fucking Sony and playing the Ozzfest), and can be enjoyed for their pronged tongue in cheek theatrics, much in the way punk kids can dance to Alice Cooper.

So the next time you are feeling like "thou hast bred hate where there dwelt none," when you get that itch to grow fangs and sink your teeth into some pasty party flesh or scream about how you are "Naked and insane and destined for a spiteful fate wherein evil sought the shamed as pawns in greater stakes," Buy this album or get a razor and you're your shameless flesh carve: 666!!! (the number of the beast, idiot).

[katherine bauer and drew grey]



The Microphones Mount Erie K Records

All the anticipation surrounding The Microphones' follow up to the remarkable Glow pt. 2 has been hyped with rumors of its epic proportions and more teasers than a prom date, namely two remix EPs prior to the release of the album. After its release, Mount Eerie, or "ount erie" as the cover boasts (pardon the art fart) falls short of its thematic aspirations for what amounts to be five strong songs and a mess of over the top-heavy-handed filler (like so). In typical Microphones fashion, the record is chalk full of guest appearances, with Calvin Johnson in the role of the Universe, Karl Blau (Little Wings) playing Death, and all Phil Elvrum's other homeboys and girls filling out the rest of the larger than life cast on this five part tale. The linear storyline makes for an episodic listen, while the tracks unfold seamlessly, all recorded in one go on 16-track, making for one body of song and sounds. The story goes something like this: (Track 1) Elvrum is born and, taking flight from Death, runs up said mountain where he's

watched by the sun... (Track 2) On his way up he stops and sings about his unrequited love... (Track 3) Johnson enters the picture to ask the traveler "intimate questions and sing..." (Track 4) Elvrum is killed and then eaten by vultures... (Track 5) Dead, Elvrum turns to the bigger mountain in the sky. The end. Certainly not a groundbreaking idea, or as profound as the story of a deaf, dumb, and blind pinball wizard, but you're in for more character and depth on this than your average indie pop outing.

It is hard to separate Mount Eerie from musical theatre or other rock operas, making this the first lo-fi pop opera I've come across since Neutral Milk Hotel's In an Aeroplane Over the Sea. After a rocky 10-minute start of drum circle fluff (holy patchouli) the opening track kicks in with off kilter chords strummed against hesitant vocals and ominous soundscape. It is at the album's most theatrical moments where its conception manages to make itself felt. Elvrum announces "scary trumpets" and with the implausibility reserved for Musicals the trumpets sound in. In such instances, the story comes to life from a seemingly insignificant tagline that would read similarly to Sly Stalone's rock climbing thriller Cliffhanger. Such is the case at Mount Eerie's climax, which bears the same name, when hand drums and rumbling bass sound off Death's entrance, and Elvrum's murder; complete with gasps and groans and an entire exchange of lyrical dialogue. In the midst of story, and boring soundscape, that ties the songs together, are five of The Microphones strongest tunes to date. The lush psych textures remain in Elvrum's enduring song-writing, and his innovative recording execution has improved with the ambitious project. In the end, Mount Eerie demonstrates further creative growth for The Microphones, but no need to excessively press (release) the issue. If nothing else the experience/exercise that is Mount Eerie has reinstated my passion for rock climbing. [Tim Abondello]

The microphones are playing in Bard Hall today, may 16th, at 9:00pm

Bardstock Rumbles Springfling

by **Conor Gaudet**

Spring fling weekend was once again a delightful affair and lucky enough to have good weather. In addition to the rock climbing wall, tallest thing competition and seemingly endless tabling, there was the now traditional Bardstock, this being it's third year. I originally intended to write this article as I had watched the various performances; drunk. But once I got drunk I didn't feel like writing anymore and now there are time and monetary restrictions that prevent me from trying it again. If you'd like to simulate my drunkenness, punch yourself hard in the temple, prolong all the S sounds and pronounce the letter combination "nt" as "nn."

Moving on. If you thought Songs From The Old Gym II was good, how about a twelve hour live version? There are obviously too many performances from throughout the day to recount them all. Memorable performances,

however, included vocals by Andrew Gori, accompanied by Andrew Gori on guitar, playing songs such as (what I assumed was an improv) Make Out With Me, as was requested by an audience member. Also Akie Bermiss, of Mother Ming, along with a small accompaniment, thrilled the crowd for a while by doing that Zat za zoobie zoobie zaba zip zeet zow thing, and funk'd his way through a rendition to the groovilicious James Brown song Like A Sex Machine. Later in the day as things progressed, I wasn't under the tent but from my distant perch behind the toasters, I could hear II El Canon laying down hard rock riffs over the caterwauling about a girl that broke someone's heart, a long time ago. Even from that distance Zach Martin projects the cocky bastard persona so necessary in rock stars and so lacking in many of the shy bandleaders of Bard today. Dan "The Drummener"

Brunnemer, drummer for II El Canon as well as thirty-seven other bands that performed that day, was kept busy behind the scenes as well working sound, in some cases simultaneously while drumming. Formosa followed II El Canon with what may have been their last performance ever, which was met by an enthusiastic crowd.

Early on in the evening the Bard String Quartet slowed things down with a soothing rendition of Stairway to Heaven. The crowd was awed into silence and after a lengthy applause could be heard to remark, "That was amazing!" and "Couldn't you hold it? You missed the best part."

The bands with the coveted late night timeslots, when people are at the height of the drunkenness, got the crowd on their feet and in some cases climbing the tent poles. The Ex-Jean Jackets rocked their formerly denim asses

through their set, occasionally switching instruments and getting the slightly tipsy crowd worked into a small frenzy.

The crowd favorite of the night seemed to be the electronic pop combo Deadly Divorce. Despite the absence of fifth member April, "our little Madeline off in Paris," everyone still did that Bard girl dance, shaking their clenched fists, bobbing their heads from side to side and marching in place in harmonious synchronicity to the music. Special guest appearance by Mike Nason's mom seemed to elicit as big a response as when the band was actually playing.

Arguably the most entertaining yet short-lived performance of the night came immediately after Deadly Divorce. The one song set of the clearly drunk Hearts of Darkneses blasted through the crowd and left the audience stunned. They abandoned the lyrics of an electrotrash version of

311's Down somewhere between the first and second verse and just fucked shit up for 2 minutes or so, occasionally trying their luck at catching the chorus.

The night ended with the return to stage of Christ Aborted In Nativity, under the name Die Totenhaus, with their original drummer, playing for the 37th time that night, Dan Brunnemer.

When asked to comment on his participation in so many of the performances of Bardstock III, Brunnemer said, "Fuck Bard." I spoke with Bard's most eligible bachelor, Alex Cannon on the exclusion from the bill of perhaps the only Brunnemer band that didn't play that day, Large Monsters. Alex told me, "I actually think we broke up." But don't you fans worry too much. Plans are already in progress for a Large Monsters cover band.

Punk Rock Prom Rocks Red Room

by **Kirk Musicus**

Considering the climate of this semester, the Punk Rock Prom occurring was almost unthinkable. A Red Room/ Old Gym event at which kids got together and had fun, fun as oppose to breaking shit/ lighting fires/ proliferating stupidity, was something that seemed like a distant memory to many of the students... yet it did happen... it did indeed...

Concieved as a gift to dodgeball targets by the illustrious Kelly Berry, the Punk Rock Prom

marked not only the long awaited reopening of the Red Room but the beginning of a full scale Old Gym revival. Kids decked in punk formal attire arrived to safety pin party favors in addition to crayons and coloring book images of the illustrious Leon Botstein that even Security snickered at.

Proms are meant to be magic, and so the Punk Rock Prom was magical. Several bands played, people danced, kids feel in love, and at the end of the night

everyone left having a good time. The event should not of been a diamond in the rough of this semester, it should be what is expected of the Old Gym, but regardless it was a start. It proved what concerned students have been saying all year, the Old Gym is a vital space that can be respected and utilized for its main purpose, kids getting together.



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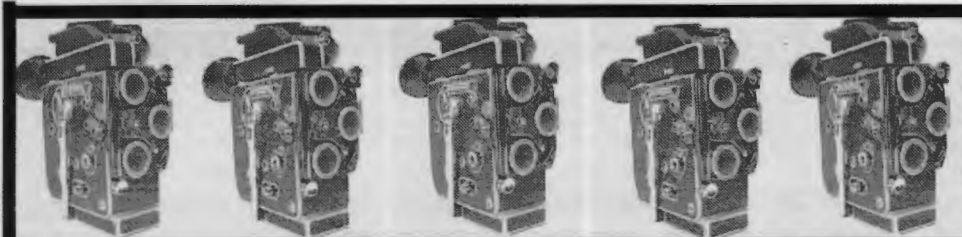
Contributors: Annie Mojallali, Gus Feldman, Mary Backlund, Katherine Bauer, Adam Howard, Jase Miles-Plrez

"The Rushed Issue"

- Tosh post-It Chiang
- Liv post-prog rock Carrow
- Christine post-Neumann
- Eli post-al Lehrhoff
- Mike post-atari(s) Lerman
- Fariyah post-frog Zaman
- Drew post-AA Gray
- Kelly post-feitler Berry
- Matt post-DIY Dineen
- Tim post-master Abondello
- Liz post-cereal Koerner
- Kate pre-feitler Crockford

leaving: Rafi Rom, Vincent Valdamnis

We're Sorry that we couldn't publish all the submissions



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Asian Films are Go!

by Mike Lerhman

If you're going to be in NYC after school gets out, you might want to check out Subway Cinema's Asian Films Are Go! Festival. Drawing upon 22 different films from six different countries in Asia, Subway Cinema has created a festival with an almost exact division in the type of films they are showing. The first category is the sentimental. Though, as Americans, we are often used to sentimentality in our filmmaking, some of the films chosen for this festival seem to lay it on thicker than Titanic ever would. There's Too Young To Die, the 67 minute, Korean digital video project about two 70-year-olds in love. Despite the sweet, stereotyped romantic nature of the film, it does draw its edginess (and probably also its cheap appeal) from the amount of graphic sexual intercourse it contains. There's also Just One Look, the coming-of-age, 70s period piece from Hong Kong that even the festival organizers themselves compare to Cinema Paradiso. After all the kitschiness

of the film, it does turn out to be one of the more enjoyable pieces from the "heartwarming" side of the festival. And who could forget Bounce Ko Gals, the sweet Japanese equivalent to a teen, girl-bonding movie (ala Crossroads) about a group of high-school prostitutes trying to raise enough money in one night to send one of them to New York. This film bops along like a piece of pop culture, but never quite manages to pin down a solid thread for its viewers.

Then, however, there is the darker side of the festival. We'll start with obvious, of course. Once again, I'll mention how brilliant and prolific Park Chan-Wook's Sympathy For Mr. Vengeance is. Though extremely violent, this film touches you emotionally in a way that Bounce Ko Gals would never be capable of. But it is not all so heavy. The festival will also include fun films like Versus, the slapstick zombie flick from Japan. Or what about Corey Yuen's (director of The Transporter)

lesbian cops and robbers film So Close. And what would an Asian film festival be without a film by Takashi Miike? Actually, in this case, two films by Takashi Miike. There is his most violent (often gratuitously so) and darkly funny Ichi the Killer which has been cited on several occasions for its ability to make people vomit, despite its cartoonish qualities. On the more serious side of Miike, there is his virtually shot for shot remake of Kinji Fukasaku's Graveyard of Honor, a brilliant yakuza film from the 70s made by the late director of Battle Royale. Though Miike's version does not always catch all the political implications and character development of the original film, it does have the raw drive towards insanity that was underlying in all of Fukasaku's work.

To go along with these themes of violence, Subway Cinema will also be honoring director Lam Wah Chuen with the Best Chinese Language Feature Film Debut Award for his film Runaway Pistol. Though a

valiant effort in some ways, Pistol actually manages to make the issues of gun violence extremely free of poignancy and often times uninteresting. This is an example of the type of film that gives violent Asian films a bad name. Though it is an anti-gun violence film, it's execution allows it to become a part of the violent culture that it preaches against.

Finally, there are crossover films and exceptions to the more familiar genres altogether. The best example is Out, a film that could easily be compared to How To Make An American Quilt in its depiction of bonding between middle-aged women. Except here, the bonding takes the form of chopping up and disposing of one of their husbands and the kinds of complications these women run into with the mob. Through it all, they stick together and are loyal (for the most part) to one another. Out is a quirky little film that is worth a look.

As for exceptions, there's always the unexpected Japanese

sporting delight Ping Pong which employs surrealist filmmaking techniques with a very realistic story of competing table tennis players. Already a big hit in both Philadelphia and Annandale-On-Hudson this year, Ping Pong is a real crowd-pleaser. And then finally there is the new film from Korean writer Park Jeoung-Wu (Attack the Gas Station), Break Out. This film marks Park's attempt at writing something pseudo-political. Though often funny, the slapstick nature of his writing prevents the film from taking off and making any solid points.

It should be mentioned that like many of us in the Asian film community, the good people at Subway Cinema are mourning the loss of actor Leslie Cheung who committed suicide this spring. The festival will close with a memorial screening of one of his most popular films, The Bride With White Hair, followed by another of his films which is yet to be announced.

There are other films in the festival that the Free Press

Sequels and an X-MEN 2 Review

by Adam Howard

Unfortunately this will be a summer dominated by sequels. I guess original films are too risky in the summer movie season. Some of these, big budget, out of this world adventures I anticipate (The Matrix Reloaded, Terminator 3) others I wouldn't see unless someone paid me to (2 Fast 2 Furious, Tomb Raider 2). I haven't seen a great character driven film set on this planet, this century since About Schmidt and I probably won't see another until October. That said I like this silly popcorn flick as much as the next guy. I also believe that sequels are held up to too high a standard. Even more than that I believe that comic book films are held up to way too a high a standard. Maybe we're spoiled as fans of this stuff. Or maybe we foolishly expect every comic book movie to be exactly

how it appeared on the page. Everyone always seems to come out of the latest "big event" movie disappointed somehow. With the exception of maybe The Phantom Menace I think the criticism really isn't warranted (what the hell was wrong with Spider-Man really?). These movies aren't trying to win awards and people seem to forget that. I didn't love the first X Men movie and I gather few did. I admired the director, The Usual Suspects Bryan Singer and I think he did a fair job the first time out of giving certain characters like Wolverine and Rogue a good background story. However, many characters so beloved from the cartoon and comic books were either horribly miscast (in the case of Cyclops) or not given enough to do (in the case of Storm). Because of my general so-so

feelings about the original and my strong conviction that every film should be judged on its own terms including sequels, I had no particular expectations about the second one. Let's face it sequels are made primarily to make more money. I can't think of any movie that really NEEDED a second or third part. Still I don't complain when they give me one and on rare occasions they offer something new and better (The Empire Strikes Back or The Godfather Part II for example). There's no question X2 exists to make more money and my God it will and on the strength of the opening scene alone I think it probably deserves to. It features my new favorite X Men character "Nightcrawler" (played by Cabaret and Eyes Wide Shut's Alan Cumming) teleporting through the White House in an assassination attempt on the

President. Why he's doing this and what his role in X2 is all about I won't try to explain because, frankly, it's all just too damn complicated (something about serums, mind control I think). The plot at its most basic is about an evil man named Stryker (Brian Cox) who wants to wipe out all the mutants on earth or something like that. But with all the wild action set pieces and show stopping uses of the X-Men's various (and pretty cool) powers you'll soon get too distracted to get involved too deeply in the plot and its "love what's unfamiliar to you" theme. And I mean this as a compliment. X2 really delivers what you come to see: the X-Men showing their stuff and using their powers in fun and elaborate ways. There are still characters who get shafted a bit in screen time. Cyclops is particular is barely in it and when he is he's

poorly performed. It's also hard to complain about such things as plot holes or hokey acting when there's so much excitement on screen. Magnetos hurtling metal, Storm's causing storms, Jean Grey is parting a sea, IceMan is doing his ice thing, and naturally Wolverine broods, kicks some ass, then broods some more. This is definitely not everyone's cup of tea. It would probably help to have some knowledge of these characters from the comic book or at least the last movie. I think if you appreciate these kinds of films for what they are - overblown pieces of delicious candy - then you'll love it. I walked out giddily talking up how cool Nightcrawler was like a 13 year old kid and in my estimation that means that this movie did its job and did it well.

The Matrix Reloaded

by Fariyah Zaman

All through this two-and-a-half-hour festival of exploding glass I just kept thinking to myself, please don't end with "To Be Concluded," please don't end with "To Be Concluded." This movie is clearly part of a trilogy, it would be obvious and commercial and lame. Well, guess what happened. I'll give you a hint, its acronym is TBC. And it was all of those things, proving how difficult it is for the 'middle movie' to stand on its own two self-contained feet. I also wish that the closing credits did not run to the tune of Rage Against the Machine's Calm Like a Bomb. But would I discourage anyone from seeing it? Oh hell no. Forget the more literary bound thebardfreepress.vol4.issue8

Lord of the Rings trilogy, this is our generation's Star Wars, the premise that questioned the limits of our reality through the use of the fanciest technology and prettiest people around. As tidily completed as the first movie was, for the past two years you've had this itch in the back of your mind telling you that the battle was still raging on. None of the knockoffs of the first movie's trademark action sequences would cut it. It was time for Matrix Reloaded.

Without giving too much of the plot away, the second installment to the Matrix machine sees an older, wiser Neo (Keanu Reeves), aided by his girlfriend (Carrie-Anne Moss) and captain

(Lawrence Fishburne), busy trying to fulfill the prophecy of the Chosen One and kicking ass with his mastery over a brand new bag of tricks. Keeping him from his goal is the enemy's updated technology, an unprecedented attack on the underground rebel city of Zion, and a couple of random questions about the nature of existence. From what I can tell, the movie's greatest weakness, other than a sometimes just short of completely nonsensical plotline (we can ignore that really), is the fact there appear to be only three basic types of scenes. There's the inspirational talk-about-fate scene that makes you want to shout "Today is our Independence Day!" at the end of it, the philosophical

rambling about the matrix and humanity scene, and the longer and cooler than you ever thought possible action scene. The scene that defies this rubric, not necessarily in a good way, is an excessively long montage of the tribe-like peoples of Zion partying down while Neo and Trinity get all hot and bothered in the bedroom. Don't ask, just see for yourself. It's bizarre. There were also a few scenes in which the movie just lay back and reveled in it's own snappy dialogue and deliciously leather-clad style, and these tended to make for welcome change and a little bit of comedy relief.

As for the movie's greatest strength? The fact that it's repetitiveness doesn't matter in the face of one visual stunner

or satisfyingly cheesy plot twist after another. Granted, some of those action sequences can be a little exhausting, but they DO NOT DISAPPOINT. Matrix audiences want an insane spectacle; it's probably the number reason for investing in the sequel. On display in Reloaded is a dazzling array of graphics, charming new characters, entertaining comedic interludes, comforting references to the original, and special effects sweet special effects. Wander aimlessly as it can, Matrix Reloaded continues in the tradition of a stylish action movie with technology, heart, some brains. So go on, put on a pair of dark sunglasses and a vinyl catsuit and find out if Neo saves the human race. You know you want to.