

CD Reviews

Musical tidbits under the tree

BY CHAD SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

'Tis the season to blow a lot of money. Yes!

You are forced to Christmas shop again. You could get uptight about it, or you could just bite the bullet before you wish you had a bullet in your head before having to shop on Christmas eve.

Long lines and pushy salespeople are waiting to ambush you, but that's the least of your worries if you don't know what to get. Here's some reviews of new music that you might want to stuff stockings with.

The Smashing Pumpkins

Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness
Virgin

Now bonafide rock stars, one might think the Pumpkins would want to be lazy from here on in: eke out a living as "serious" artists, and quit their day jobs. This new album (a double CD) shows that they are not taking a breather, and that any sleep they're getting must be pretty restless.

Equal parts hateful aggression and tranquil tenderness, this CD is a mood swing in motion. It rocks you to sleep, then blasts fiery sound at you like an emotional alarm clock. The title of the album exposes much of the feeling that seems to have gone into this work.

Don't let it fool you. I could swear some of these songs are happy, if only sarcastically. This CD follows through on their previous efforts, capturing a mood and beating it into the ground. Pleasantly.

Onyx
All We Got Iz Us
Def Jam

After 3 years of silence, Onyx comes back screaming lyrics. Not exactly louder than a bomb, but at least as loud as a Mach 10.

Violent is a good word for the lyrics on this release: "Think of takin' my own life, I might as well/Cept they might not sell weed in hell." As you might have guessed, smoking reefer gets a lot of play on this disc. I just don't understand; if they're smoking out so much, why are they so mad?

This CD is not on Sen. Robert Dole's Christmas list. It's geared mainly to "parole violators, drug dealers, trespassers, smugglers, and muggers in the gutter with rug cutters."

Anthrax
Stomp 442
Elektra

In the beginning, every stoner in the smoking area wanted to have a concert T-shirt of the three mandatory thrash metal bands. These were Metallica, Slayer and Anthrax (if you count

See Biscuits, pg. 8

'She Loves Me' continues to get rave reviews

Audience falls in love with story and cast of the theatre department's latest production

Applause, howls and whistles of approval from both critic and audience confirmed the success of the musical production of *She Loves Me*.

The delightful musical love story/comedy, produced by UNLV's Department of Theatre Arts, is adapted from Miklos Laszlo's *Parfumerie*. From the downbeat of the orchestra conductor's baton to the final bow of the cast, this was, without a doubt, one of their best efforts to date.

The story takes place in "Maraczek's Parfumerie," a plush perfumery located in a city reminiscent of 1930 Budapest, Hungary. Costume designer Katrina Hertfelder, scene designer Ryk Souza and choreographer Denise Gabriel are all to be commended for their brilliant choices of props, costumes, sets and marvelous dance sequences.

These elements not only put the audience into the mood and transported them to that time period, it provided the entire cast with the right vehicle to deliver the stellar performances that were seen in Saturday night's show.

The lighting, designed by Joe Aldrige, was right where it needed to be with just the right amount of illumination. While you could hear the spoken and sung word nearly perfectly,

the orchestra overwhelmed two soloists in several spots from my third-row perspective.

Back to the play. Simply wonderful. It had all the elements a good play should have: talented actors, characters with distinct personalities, an interesting plot and good direction. I felt like I knew the characters and was a part of the action.

The play touches on several important issues, even in the 20th century: the search for love and what that love will be like; looking for love everywhere but right in front of you, and the yearning for the chance to prove yourself.

All the main action takes place at the perfumery. The shop is run like they were in the good ol' days; customers were catered to, even sung to.

I really liked the song that was sung by the staff, in barbershop-quartet style, to each customer as they left the store, purchase in hand: "Thank you, Madame, please call again, Madame, do call again, M-a-a-dame." The repetition and augmentation of that theme played a part in the development of the storyline.

Besides the usual business bustle, the personal lives of the characters were the more important topic of conversation.

Georg Nowack, played by the talented Jason Johnson, is in love with someone he corresponds to and knows only as "dear friend." His co-workers, the cad-extraordinaire Steven Kodaly, played by David Shamburger; the kindly, always-there-to-give-advice Ladislav Sipos, played to perfection by the multi-talented

Glenn Peters; the delightfully sinful Ilona Ritter, portrayed by the extraordinarily animated Elizabeth Brownlee; and the eager-to-succeed Arpad Laszlo, played by the talented Michael DeVous, Jr. are all privy to this activity, anticipating when he will hear from her next.

While trying to figure out how to sell the wooden-music boxes that Maraczek, portrayed by playwright Anthony Del Valle, has just informed the staff they will now sell, Miss Amalia Balash, played by the wonderfully talented Kathryn Ambler, arrives in the store in search of employment.

Although Nowack explains there are no jobs available, the mesmerizing Balash sells one of the "musical candy boxes" to a very discerning customer. Much to Nowack's dismay, she is hired on the spot. This sets the stage for competition and resentment between the two.

After Balash endears herself to the rest of the staff, it becomes known that she, too, has a mystery love. Coincidentally, she knows him only by letters that are signed "dear friend." When Ritter quizzes Balash about what he looks like and Balash can't give her any definitives, Ritter warns her "not to lose him in a crowd."

Some of the best moments in the play take place at The Cafe Imperiale, where Balash is to meet her "friend" face-to-face. Coincidentally, Nowack must meet his "friend" there as well. Hailed as a place for romance, Balash and Nowack "run into each other," and a

See Rave, pg. 8

Van Damme hits Vegas to promote new film

BY JAN WILLIAMS
A&E EDITOR

Christmas came early for the crowd and employees of Planet Hollywood, who crowded in Monday afternoon to greet action-film star Jean Claude Van Damme.

There to promote the Christmas release of his newest film *Sudden Death*, Van Damme lost no time talking about the action film. He posed good-naturedly with the Thunder hockey team and their mascot, Boom Boom, who presented filmland's newest goalie with an official team jersey.

He was an engaging conversationalist; he spoke of the hard work that got him where he was; how he had to push himself daily or his career would not move on; and how he wanted to continually improve his movie roles, his acting abilities, his entire person in general.

"You cannot jump from *Mad Max* to *Hamlet*," the actor analogized. "You have to go via *Lethal Weapon*, right?"

But, in true Van Damme style, he also talked about *Sudden Death*. His latest role casts him as ex-firefighter Darren McCord, who has a troubled past. The action takes place at the seventh game of the Stanley Cup finals, where terrorist Daniel Foss, played by Powers Boothe, has a deadly surprise waiting for the crowd of 17,000 should he not be able to extort millions of dollars.

From the trailer Universal Pictures

showed at the press conference, there were some incredible stunts, some of them, including time on the ice with real-life professional hockey players, were performed by Van Damme. Here is an excerpt from the Planet Hollywood interview:

What's the name of the hockey team you play for in the movie?

The Penguins.

How extensive was your training for this role?

Not too much, a couple of weeks. I've skied before, since I was 11, so I'm okay with balance. When you play goalie, you have so much padding, that if you take a fall, it's like falling into a big bed, you know.

Did you do all your stunts for this movie?

No, not all of them, because... well... even if I wanted to...

How about the jump (Van Damme swan-dives off a building with a bungie-chord around his ankle)?

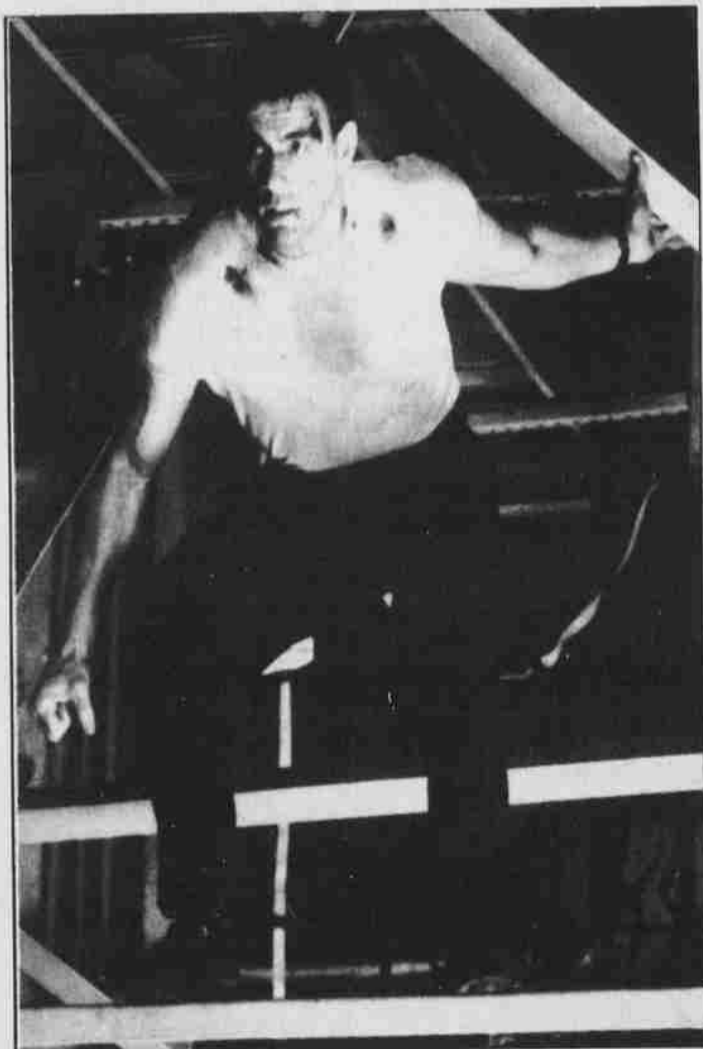
The jump was me, but they shot me on an elevated platform and you have a big air cushion. You jump from the edge, and you have to go out as far as you can. I got a very good, how do you call it in the U.S.?

A take-off?

Ya, a good take-off I guess. With all the years of ballet and martial arts, it helps.

What besides the action of drew you to this film in particular?

See Vegas, pg. 10



Van Damme battles terrorists to save the day in his new movie *Sudden Death*, which Universal Pictures will release Dec. 22.