

Bad Religion vocalist meets with public

By Valerie Miller
Contributing A&E Writer

The much-anticipated appearance of the lead singer and songwriter of the group **Bad Religion**, Greg Graffin, had to be moved at the last minute on Friday from the UNLV Moyer Student Union Ballroom to Benway Records across the street due to what has been termed "paperwork problems."

Graffin had originally been scheduled to appear at the MSU Ballroom to sign autographs and perform a rare free solo concert for UNLV students. Instead, at about 11:30 a.m., two-and-a-half-hours before the scheduled appearance, the events organizers, KUNV Radio and its DJ, Ryan "Tiger" Kinder, got word that the event could not be held in the MSU. Enter Benway Records, who were more than happy to save the day.

"We got the call at about 11:30 about having him (Graffin) here, and I said, 'Sure,'" said Ronn Benway, owner of Benway Records at 4800 Maryland Parkway. "I called somebody extra in to work, and I got a customer to help watch things for the event."

The 300 or so fans that showed up to meet Graffin were very well behaved, according to Benway.

"We just asked people not to take anything and they have been pretty good," he said. "They (the fans) know that it is just my wife and I running the store. We are not a big corporation."

When I arrived around 2 p.m. at the store to meet Graffin in person, I was somewhat surprised. I had ex-



by Valerie Miller / The Rebel Yell

(Left) Bad Religion's lead singer Greg Graffin poses with his fans for a fun photo at Benway Records.

pected the usual fan-feeding frenzy and martial law security precautions that I had witnessed at rock star appearances past. What I found, instead, was more in the nature of a reception of a group of friends.

There were lines, of course, but they were informal ones. Everyone mingled freely, including Graffin himself.

Dressed casually in a black shirt and khaki shorts, Graffin could have almost passed for one of the fans in the crowd. I say "almost" because there

is a quality about him that made him stand out from the crowd. It's something called "presence."

Even if you didn't know anything about *Bad Religion*, or Greg Graffin, you would be able to instantly tell he has that instant quality about him that commands attention.

He talked with fans like they were all friends that he knew. He talked about his daughter. No star trip here; finally a rock star whose actually a nice guy.

For nearly an hour-and-a-half, Graffin signed everything put before him: records, tapes, CDs, flyers, letters, hats, t-shirts and he posed for photos as well.

Graffin's cooperative attitude was even more commendable when you consider the fact that his planned appearance and solo concert at UNLV was so abruptly canceled. Instead of complaining about what had transpired and pointing fingers, he simply said he was disappointed "for himself and for UNLV students."

"I feel bad about it and for the students," Graffin said when asked about the cancellation. "I was really looking forward to it. It was something I was doing for them (the UNLV students). I was really pumped for the concert."

Graffin and *Bad Religion* also performed at the Sam Boyd Silver Bowl stadium the next night.

Because of the last minute move to Benway Records, Graffin didn't get to put on his performance. "This would have been a great event for UNLV," Kinder said as he looked on at the fans still streaming into the small record store at the last minute, hoping to meet their idol.

Bad Religion has released numerous records over the years and has developed a very loyal following. Albums include *Bad Religion*, *Into the Unknown*, *Back to the Known*, *No Control*, *Against the Grain*, *80-85*, *Generator*, *Recipe for Hate*, *Stranger Than Fiction*, and their most recent release, *The Gray Race*.

Graffin has written some of the rock band's most popular songs. Many of the verses relay a pessimistic view of today's society and a disenchantment with life in general, like the title track of the *Gray Race* CD and other songs on it, such as "Them and Us," "Punk Rock Song," "Empty Causes" and "Street of America." It also includes the more upbeat tune, "A Walk."

No negativity could be felt Friday, however. Instead, Greg Graffin and *Bad Religion* earned a few new fans that day.

All Saints flying high with a very spicy debut album

Pauline Villapando
Staff A&E Writer

Alleluia!

Finally, a hot chic band that has all the makings of the **Spice Girls** without all the sick girl power sweetness accompanying these luscious Brits. The British girl group, **All Saints**, has made an explosive debut into the musical arena with their slow groovin' self-entitled album, containing some smooth harmonies that could knock out the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

"We bring a lot of influences into our music — rap, R&B, pop, soul," says Melanie Blatt, 21, one of the talents making up All Saints. "We are real music fans."

This is quite obvious when listening and pondering over the groove-based tunes on their first album.

"Never Ever" is a soul twisting song about a girl who's confronting her beau about his uncool behavior. The beginning of the song starts with one of the ladies talking in a soft, mellow voice.

"A few questions that I need to know, how you could ever hurt me so," the lyrics read. "I need to know what I've done wrong and how long it's been going on."

These lyrics are slowly followed by a perfect example of pristine harmonizing skills when the rest of the girls in the group join for a soothing and relaxing chant of oohs. With this

tranquil mixture of satiny voices, you're "Never Ever" gonna want this song to end.

Don't let the title of the next song, "Bootie Call," deceive you. It isn't a hard core rap song filled with vulgar terminology and crude references to a woman's endowments. Instead, it's a cool combination of unique sounds that will leave your body swaying to a sweet R&B beat.

Throughout the song, the words, "bring it on now," are repeated several times, once again in that rhythmic harmonizing style that gives *All Saints* their trademark sound.

In that same lustrous tone, the ladies sing together, "Never stop giving good love that's what I call you for. Never stop baby give it up cause I know where it came from, you got more."

Luckily, *All Saints* do have more on their album for those who yearn for more great soul moving music.

For those of you who are into all kinds of music, you might appreciate the *All Saints* remix of a popular **Red Hot Chili Peppers** tune, "Under The Bridge." You can tell right away that the song was an old school one re-mixed based on the familiar guitar riffs heard at the beginning.

Actually, it merely teases you with cuts and incomplete beats of the original tune. But even these are mixed in differently with the whole R&B tune.

Instead of the heart crunching angst of lead singer Anthony Kiedes,

we get to listen to the fluid melodies of these British babes singing the same words. You won't be able to just sit and croon to this tune like the original version. The remix will get you groovin' to the latest twist of "Under The Bridge."

The powerfully melodic beats of "Heaven" also will leave you boogying on cloud nine. The romantic lyrics mixed in with cool record scratches makes for an uplifting experience in musical experimentation.

"Lift me up," the group sings. "Take me high, take me higher than I've been before. I need time, time to find the road to my destiny. Heaven help me."

Well, heaven help those who can't resist the song's powerful attempt at seducing the listener.

The descriptive title, "If You Want To Party," says it all. It's got a boisterous and fun beat that could turn any atmosphere into a lively place to be seen. The girls take on a different pattern here and move more into a hip hop type of style, but don't lose an inkling of their funkadelic rhythms and harmonies.

The hosts of this *All Saints* party are Melanie Blatt, Shaznay Lewis, and Canadian sisters, Nicky and Natalie Appleton. These four girls will give you more for your musical taste than any Spice Girl can fulfill. You can finally change your spice rack in favor of a more flavorful group of women.

Mystery 'Drood' to open tonight

The Rebel Yell

The University Theatre opens the Tony Award Winning murder mystery, **Drood!** tonight at 8 p.m. in the Judy Bayley Theatre.

This wildly warm-hearted musical has enchanted audiences of all ages, and critics alike.

Based on the unfinished novel by Charles Dickens, this rollicking tongue-in-cheek musical by Rupert Holmes provides a lively look at the Victorian Music Hall era and its hilariously broad theatrical style.

Drood! has won five Tony Awards including best musical, best book and best score as well as nine Drama Desk Awards.

Drood! is a play within a play, filled with audience participation. It is, in fact, the audience who ultimately decides the play's outcome.

The plot is drenched in love, mad obsession, rivals, opium, murder and investigation. Audience members review potential suspects and, through a series of unusual voting events and much cheering and booing, determine the conclusion of each performance.

Guest Director **Dianne Haak Edson** has directed scores of critically acclaimed theatrical productions on both professional and academic stages, as well as film and television. Edson has made over 30 dramatic, documentary and educational films and has won 24 national and international awards for

her work. She holds MFA degrees from both UCLA and the American Film Institute.

UNLV favorite, Musical Director **Harold Weller** will conduct the vibrant score of *Drood!* He is joined by guest artist and choreographer, **Maria Pogue**.

The creative team includes scenic design by **Michele Anderson**, costume design by **Ellis Pryce-Jones**, lighting design by **Brackley Frayer** and sound design by **Keith Coming**.

The cast features **Tom Turner**, **Jessica Raymer**, **Dawn Copeland**, **Rochele Tillman**, **Curtis C.**, **Evelina Marchetti**, **David Brouillard** and **Isaiah Uffabazo**.

Others include Jake Bendel, Scott Johnson, Joshua Roberts, Tye Brown, Joey D'Attili, Sonya Evans, Lisa Jablonski, Jill Michael, Lita Fice, Roy Ting, Derick Swinson, Skylar Stephens, Elizabeth Skrzynecky and Lisa Stonebraker.

Performances of *Drood!* are tonight through Saturday at 8 p.m. and May 6-9 with matinees Sunday and May 10 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the Performing Arts Center Box Office and Dillard's department stores. Discounts are available.

The Box Office is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 895-3801.