

Frenchman Perec ably pens *A Void* despite eschewing letter 'E'

By MICHAEL JANSSEN
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

During my vacation from rigors of scholarly toil, I found I had many uncommonly vacant hours during which I could indulgently slum in my room (with air conditioning, natch; Virginia's hot in dog days) and flip through books.

Such a book was *A Void*, a work from a Gallic chum (initials G. P.; look to your right, silly!) and put into our own syntax by a daring translator of no small skill, Mr. G. Adair.

For *A Void* lacks a crucial glyph, a symbol no doubt oft-drawn by you with your quill in hand, smart patron of our own *Old Gold and Black*.

This symbol sits 'twixt D and F in our catalog of orthographic tools, No. 5 in our ABCs, and as I spin this bookish appraisal I avoid it much as *A Void's* author did.

Sorry, but I can't ink it, or I'd ruin my sporting try to scratch out my first *lipogram*, that is to say, a work of writing which avoids using a particular symbol or group of symbols as a way of, truthfully, showing off skills

which distinguish an author as a cunning linguist.

This glyph sitting 'twixt D and F is a crux of our words, occupying many blanks in words such as th-, h-, h-r, sh-, -t c-t-ra. You catch my drift, no? So dig this, man: a 283-pg. manuscript without that common fallback at an author's disposal!

But that's not *A Void's* only odd trait and claim to individuality. Obviously, G. P.'s a man with a lot of damn Gaul, and that chap laid down *A Void* in *français*; at that point it was *La disparition*.

Mr. P was a singularly brilliant author who was six ft. down (that is, found his dirty plot) all too soon (at 46), but in his short span in our world did us good with a body of work including crosswords, puns, "Madam, I'm Adam"s, radio plays, columns and award-winning works, including his book *Things*.

Translator Adair, just as dashing, had to put *La disparition* in our words with Mr. P's odd stipulation, too. Zoinks! Tough job, but this man had chops: columnist, author, translator, hung around in Paris, Dijon, Lyon and vicinity for 3,650 days (do your math).

Not only is *A Void* void of you-know-what, but its twisty plot is a hallmark of wit, thought, daring, wordplay, brio and skill.

Protagonist and Parisian Anton Vowl is an insomniac; whiling away hours studying a rug in his flat, Vowl sinks into a void of his own mind's construction and almost sits upon sanity's brink.

Soon into *A Void*, Vowl is contradictorily "found missing" upon a pal's inquiry into his location. Not in his flat, not around at all.

Vowl's vanishing act sparks a bunch of plot twists that, truth told, can try your wits on occasion.

This book's author's approach to writing is playful, which is okay, but you must play along or you may tag along only to find frustration at his hands and digit-tips.

A Void is truthfully only for an odd sort of mind, and if you dig puns, allusion, absurdity and a ludic (if not ludicrous) wit, you'll dig *A Void*.

Munch on this particular translation of "Shakspars'" famous soliloquy (a DMV could call it "2B-NOT2B?" but Vowl calls it "Living, Or Not Living"):

*Living, or not living: that is what I ask:
If 'tis a stamp of honour to submit
To slings and arrows waft'd us by ill
winds
Or brandish arms against a flood of
afflictions,
Which by our opposition is subdu'd?*

Although it's chockablock with wit and fun, I had a coupla complaints about *A Void*, I must say.

Its author can wax wordy and go far off track, and I also had difficulty ignoring his parody's odd rhythm at first, but, you must grasp this, Mr. P couldn't avoid such quirky rhythm in writing *A Void*, mostly as a byproduct of his singularly rough and tough constraints.

I soon got familiar with his bumpy ways of spinning yarns (oft a bit similar to Italo Calvino's vivacious but difficult Italian works) and found his book thoroughly thought-provoking, wholly humorous and stunningly stimulating. So shall you, I wish. It's in our campus library and at local bookshops, too (try Rainbow).



Courtesy of Harvill

French novelist Georges Perec (1936-1982), whose maddening yet engaging novel *A Void* contains not a single e.

Coffeehouse offers cheap fun

By PAT McDONOUGH
CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

Many students become bored with the routine of a week in class, and long for a few hours to relax between papers. Others may simply want to listen to good music without spending a dime on a cover charge. Without a journey off campus, the Student Union Coffeehouse supplies the catharsis students need.

This semester's schedule brings some familiar faces back to campus and features some new acts as well. The Coffeehouse will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursdays, with a few Tuesday shows later in the semester.

Kicking off the season Sept. 7 is Albert Hill, a South Carolina quartet known for their powerful brand of electric rock.

On Sept. 14, doubting Thomas, voted Most Impressive Newcomer of the North Carolina Music Showcase, promises to bring hints of Fleetwood Mac and the Indigo Girls to the Coffeehouse.

A week later, the local band Running From Anna will be onstage to



Courtesy of doubting Thomas

Duo doubting Thomas, voted Most Impressive Newcomer of the North Carolina Music Showcase, will spin melodies smacking of the Indigo Girls in the Student Union Coffeehouse Sept. 14.

deliver a quirky set of melodies. Fueled by a pair of charismatic vocalists, with a hint of bluegrass guitar and supported by jazz-styled acoustic bass, Running From Anna has fun

with its original material, as well as with some offbeat and hilarious cover songs, such as Leo Sayer's "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing." See *Coffeehouse*, Page 11

Pasta dish aims to clog arteries

By JOE DOBNER
GRAPHICS EDITOR

Here is a fast, easy, cheap and tasty pasta recipe. Sound too good to be true? It is, as there is a catch. It could easily and accurately be called Flaming Cholesterol Death On a Plate.

This recipe is for one person, because if you had any friends, you would not be reading a cooking column in the *Old Gold and Black*.

You will need some cooking utensils. I recommend a medium-sized pot, a mixing bowl, a kitchen knife (no, that rusty, rusty pocketknife that you got as a birthday present when you were six does not qualify), a measuring cup, a skillet and a spatula.

Spaghetti Carbonara

Necessary ingredients:
Bacon (4 strips)
Some vegetable oil
Salt

Pepper
1/2 cup of grated Parmesan cheese
One egg
1/4 stick of margarine
1/4 pound of fettucini

HA HA HA! Fooled you. You thought you would need spaghetti. But, no, it's just CALLED spaghetti carbonara. You really should use fettucini.

Fill the pot half-full with hot water. Put it on a burner, switch it to high, and wait for it to boil.

While you are twiddling your thumbs and waiting for the water to boil, break the egg into the mixing bowl. Beat the egg. It's dead. It won't care. Pour the Parmesan cheese into the bowl and add some salt and pepper.

Cook the bacon. Lay the strips out on the skillet, put it on a big burner and turn it to high. Don't forget to turn the bacon over. Cook long enough to brown the bacon, so that all the insidious trichinosis are killed off before they can cause you

to miss class, or worse, die. Remove the bacon to a plate, and cut it into inch-long strips. You will notice that I did not include a ruler in the stuff that you will need, so just guess.

Keep the burner on high, but take the skillet off. Don't drain the grease.

Once the water is boiling, add a capful of cooking oil and about a teaspoon of salt. Break the fettucini in half and put it in the pot. (Break the whole wad at one time, not one at a time. Where do you go to college? Duke University?) It should take 15 to 20 minutes to cook thoroughly.

Now, while you are waiting for the fettucini to cook, turn a big burner to high and melt the butter in that greasy skillet. Once that is melted, take the skillet off the burner and turn the burner to low. Again keep the grease.

Once the fettucini is finished cooking, drain the water from the See *Cooking*, Page 11

Chieftains enchant, Beach Boys' Wilson opens up on new releases



By GRAY CRAWFORD
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

Brian Wilson

I Just Wasn't Made For These Times
(MCA)

Despite being one of the most talented and influential figures in pop history, Brian Wilson has been slapped with the reputation of being catatonic and mentally "not right."

The Don Was-produced documentary *I Just Wasn't Made For These Times* shows that he is actually a "happening guy" who might have some weird habits but is still capable of producing great music. The album is a showcase for Wilson to remake some of his best songs, including "Caroline, No" and "The Warmth Of The Sun."

After listening to the album, it's easy to see why a wide range of artists including Paul McCartney, Thurston Moore, Linda Ronstadt and Tom Petty have called Wilson a genius. The harmonies aren't quite up to Beach Boys standards, but the music is beautiful. Some may write off the Beach Boys as adolescent music, but they are a major influence on bands such as the Pixies and Weezer.

Was and Wilson did a brilliant job of selecting songs. It sounds cheesy, but you really feel like you get to know Wilson. The optimism of the Beach Boys wasn't an act; Wilson is a true romantic. It's obvious why he has had so many mental problems — you can't be as kindhearted a person as Wilson and not end up depressed in our society.

Although the album is a collection of songs from different periods of Wilson's life, it is still a cohesive work. Song after song demonstrates Wilson's hopes of peace and love for everyone as he sings about old girlfriends and longings for love. He comes off as a sweet and fragile man who has been crushed by an insensitive world.

Some may call these songs corny, but they are touching and vivid portraits of Wilson, especially "Still I Dream Of It," a 1976 home demo. The album is a must for pop fans.



By WILLY KEIBLE
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

Thurston Moore

Psychic Hearts (DGC)

As Sonic Youth traversed the nation headlining this year's Lollapalooza festival, frontman Thurston Moore's brilliant debut solo album *Psychic Hearts* was released in stores. A true testament to Moore's limitless talent, *Hearts* is chock full of flavorful treasures and only further proves that Thurston Moore is Sonic Youth.

With the flip of a switch and a turn of the dial, Moore converts dissonant wails into an eerie musical tapestry. "Ono Soul" lives up to this statement with its macabre riff layered with feedback. Coupled with Moore's unforgettable lyrics, "Ono Soul" is Thurston at his best.

The album's opening track, "Queen Bee and Her Pals," is a quirky little number which improves with each listen, as does much of the album. Moore rocks out on "Patti Smith Math Scratch" and "Staring Statues," feeding his listeners catchy choruses amidst funky riffs. This formula also makes "Hang Out" and "Cindy (rotten tanx)" worthy of equal credit.

The final three songs contrast the up-tempo mass of the album. The songs work together by building up a hypnotic feel, each one building off of the others. "Cherry's Blues," the first of the three, is a sweet song with a distinctly hollow sound to the vocals. On the next track, "Female Cop," Moore practically induces a dream state with a soothing voice and a matching melody.

The album's last track, "Elegy For All the Dead Rock Stars," is the hypnotic granddaddy of them all. Moore ends a magnificent album with a 20-minute-long instrumental masterpiece.



By PAT McDONOUGH
CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

The Chieftains

The Long Black Veil (BMG)

Mick Jagger, Sinead O'Connor, Tom Jones, Sting, Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits, The Rolling Stones and Van Morrison. Is this a Live Aid album?

How about an album of traditional Irish folk songs? The Chieftains' *The Long Black Veil* is an album of traditional airs, jigs and reels, plus an assortment of new pieces, with the exception of Van Morrison's "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?" and Tom Jones' "Tennessee Waltz."

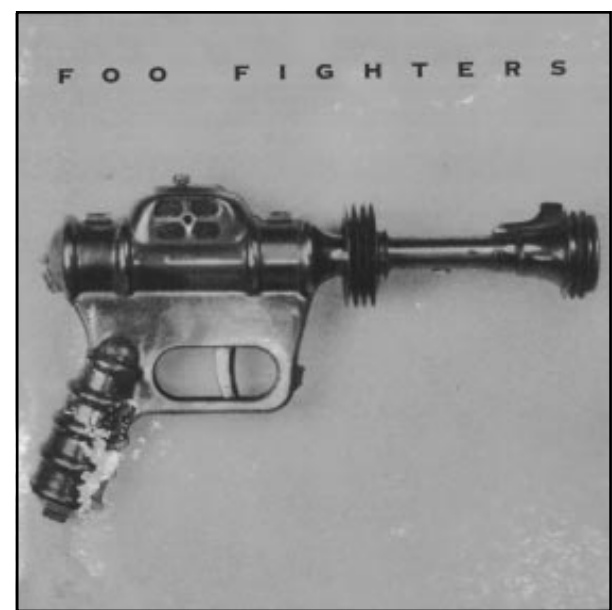
Though these two pieces compliment the folksy feel of the album, they seem slightly out of place. Still, Tom Jones resonates over the fiddles, and Van Morrison proves that no one can duplicate the heart he pours into his music.

The remainder of the album crosses over common themes in Irish music: a war-torn past, love in pastoral times and fervent passion for one's homeland. Known for rich arrangements, Paddy Moloney creates lush textures using tin whistles, fiddles, guitars, accordion and harp.

"Coast of Malabar," with vocalist/guitarist Ry Cooder, is magnificent in this respect, as it delivers a foreign, enchanting sound to the ear. Other ballads such as "The Lily of the West," with Mark Knopfler, further exemplify the depth of the sound produced by The Chieftains.

The most stirring songs on the album, however, are "The Foggy Dew" with Sinead O'Connor and the gripping "Mo Ghile Mear (Our Hero)," performed in Gaelic and English by Sting. The chorus, sung a *cappella* by Sting, evokes the atmosphere of a battlefield with an immense army, driven by the shrill cry of bagpipes and the pounding of the bodhran hand drum.

Irish music can often sound strange to ears accustomed to contemporary American music. But it is this different sound, presented with passion and honesty by artists with mass appeal, that give this album its zest.



By KYLE FORST
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

Foo Fighters

Foo Fighters (Roswell/Capitol)

Dave Grohl has been on the underground and punk scene for a long time, probably since Kurt Cobain was busy being a rebellious young high school student. We all know how skilled Grohl is on the drums from his work with Nirvana and his previous band, Scream.

But with his new band, Foo Fighters, there is no Cobain to take the full brunt of the spotlight. It's all Dave Grohl's chance to illustrate how talented a musician and songwriter he is.

Surrounded by two former members of Seattle band Sunny Day Real Estate, and one-time Germs guitarist and Nirvana collaborator Pat Smear, Grohl's vocals and guitar playing are truly impressive. Starting with "This Is a Call," an anthem for people who know better than to have an anthem, the Foo Fighters' debut is an all-around smash.

Grohl's songwriting ability is evident in the poppy, almost Beach Boys-like melody on "Big Me," the one-two punch of jazzy rhythms and blazing punk riffs of "For All the Cows" and the dense, multilayered guitars that dominate "X-Static."

The Foo Fighters' frontman seems to have taken tips from his friend and partner Cobain in his style of songwriting. Grohl deftly mixes alternately mellow and caustic rhythms, but the difference between the two is in the vocal delivery. Grohl's voice is higher and much clearer thanks to engineers Tom Rothrock and Rob Schnapf, who pulled off the monumental task of mixing Beck's *Mellow Gold*.

The songs on the Foo Fighters' debut were written well before the album, most of them during the mid- to late '80s. It makes me wonder how much better Nirvana could have been if both Grohl and Cobain had sung and played guitar. Guess we'll never find out.