

BAD RELIGION: PUNK, POLITICS AND MORE PUNK

By CHRIS GREZLAK
Music Editor

Bad Religion does not look like your ordinary punk rock band. Its lead singer holds a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology from Cornell and is married with children; the band has the appearance of five balding middle-aged men. And Bad Religion does not sound like your ordinary punk rock band, combining punk's fast catchy music with intelligent social and political commentary.

Bad Religion opened its set Sept. 10 at Ziggy's with a satire about the current state of technology, "21st Century Digital Boy," much to the pleasure of the audience.

They proceeded to launch into 90 minutes worth of music, encompassing all 12 of their earth-shaking albums.

The heart of Bad Religion's music lies in the lyrics. In the performance at Ziggy's, vocalist Greg Graffin's eloquent lines and insightful worldly comments were food for thought, even while I was trying to avoid being trampled by the violent crowd.

Throughout the set, Bad Religion confronted such topics as religion, hate, starvation and the dismal future of the planet. A recurring theme of their latest release, *The Gray Race*, the latter is best summed up by "10 in 2010." In this forecast of what's to come, Graffin pronounces, "Like piercing ear darts I heard the news today, ten billion people coming your way."

With "Cease," Bad Religion commented on the implications of death, and inadvertently made me think about

the recent tragedies at Wake Forest: "It evokes such pain and significance, what was once is reduced to remembrance."

The chaotic world in which we live was another common topic. A crowd favorite, "No Control" preached "culture was the seed of proliferation that has gotten melded into an enharmonic whole."

Similarly, "The Handshake" also pointed to the incompatibility of the human race: "There's no harmony just class and race. This is the way of the modern world, everyone fighting for dominance."

However, Bad Religion was at its best when dealing with politics. During one of his tirades in between songs, Graffin bashed all presidential candidates and announced his own desire to be nominated. The band then played its best new song, "Punk Rock Song," which discusses politics today: "The faces always different, the rhetoric the same, but we swallow it all and we see nothing change."

The crowd was thrilled by such older classics as "We're Only Gonna Die" and "Suffer," as well as more recent gems, like "Stranger Than Fiction."

A witty number, this song again attends to the follies of the human race, as Graffin wonders, "If I could fly high above the world, would I see a bunch of little dots spell the word stupidity?"

The highlight of the evening, though, was "American Jesus."

This guitar-driven anthem was a sarcastic attack at the feelings of nationalism and xenophobia so prevalent in

America.

Opening up for Bad Religion was another California punk band, Goldfinger.

A far less serious band, Goldfinger mixed beautifully ska numbers, pop songs and hard-core punk tunes.

Goldfinger delighted the crowd with their radio-friendly hit "Here in Your Bedroom," and with a vicious attack on Los Angeles, "The City With Two Faces," in which vocalist John Feldman sang, "I have had more motorcycles stolen here than Nirvana has songs about heroin."

Catchy ska numbers like "Answers," "Pictures" and a new

song "Superman" provided great beats to dance to, while faster songs like "Stay" and "Anything" sent crowd surfers in the air and moshers to the floor.

The inspired music of Bad Religion and the humor of Goldfinger provided concertgoers with an extremely entertaining night. Bad Religion accomplished a great feat in provoking serious thought about politics, the human race and the imperfect world we live in.



Courtesy of Atlantic Records

Greg Graffin, center, lead vocalist for Bad Religion, holds a degree in evolutionary biology from Cornell.

Melancholy, apathy, paranoia: R.E.M. pulls off great album

By MICKEY KRAYNYAK
Sports Editor

Sixty-five minutes is a lot of music for an R.E.M. album — more music, in fact, than can be found on any of the band's nine other studio albums. In fact, if you listen straight through all 14 songs on the Athens, Ga., quartet's latest release *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, you begin to get the impression that there isn't a whole lot left to be squeezed out of the current musical scene: *Hi-Fi* just about covers it.

The band recorded this latest record while on tour, and the result is an album that comes across as what you get when you sit the most talented band in the world down and make them record without the luxury of over-dubbing. *Hi-Fi* is stripped-down, spontaneous and as disarming as any work R.E.M. has produced in its 16-year career.

The record simultaneously reaches its artistic peak and spiritual trough after four tracks, with the subdued debut single "E-bow the Letter" and the relentlessly disturbing "Leave." The latter song ranks among the most poignant works the band has ever produced, as lead guitarist Peter Dinklage lays down threatening guitar wails over a background of an alarmingly fast-paced siren. Lead singer Michael Stipe's remark that he plans to "leave it all behind" hints that his malaise is of a frighteningly nonspecific nature.

If *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* has a shortcoming, it is that in putting out one of its more musically diverse works, R.E.M. has come close to treading on the toes of other prominent musicians. The album's third track "New Test Leper" sounds remotely like Pearl Jam, and the ballad "Be Mine," while lyrically adept, hints of Bush's "Glycerine." The resemblances in these two cases are not terribly strong, but from a band which specializes in musical anomaly, the similarity is disheartening.

Nonetheless, *Hi-Fi* remains one of R.E.M.'s most pow-



R.E.M. *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* Warner Music

erful works. The band is no longer a folk-rocking quartet intent on reconstructing fables, and its latest release illustrates this even more than its other recent albums.

If the band has changed, however, it has done so to become the planet's most capable rock band. *Hi-Fi* displays R.E.M. making full use of its musical bag of tricks and brandishing one of the most mature attitudes in pop music. When Stipe urges, "Twentieth century, go to sleep," in the album's final song "Electrolite," the listener can't help but think he's got a good idea going.



CALENDAR

To have your event listed, send mail to P.O. Box 7569, e-mail arts@ogb.wfu.edu or fax us at 759-4561.

ON CAMPUS

Exhibits

William Hogarth Prints and Color Function Painting. Two concurrent exhibits. Hogarth was an 18th-century painter who satirized England. "Color Function Painting" displays artwork of three pioneers of optical art.
When: Now through Oct. 25
Where: Gallery, Scales Fine Arts Center
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5585

Movies

Dragonheart. 1996. Sean Connery is the voice of a dragon who befriends a man trying to fight for freedom from a tyrannical king.
When: 7 p.m., 10 p.m. Fri. and Sat; 7 p.m. Sun.
Where: Pugh Auditorium.
Cost: \$2

Strangers on a Train. Alfred Hitchcock directed this film that deals with the plans for murder that two men make once they meet on a train.
When: 8 p.m. Fri.
Where: Tribble A3
Cost: Free

North By Northwest. Alfred Hitchcock thriller that is a series of misadventures for Cary Grant as he is mistaken for a government agent.
When: 10 p.m. Fri.
Where: Tribble A3
Cost: Free

Man Bites Dog. French film that follows the daily activities of a serial killer.
When: 8 p.m. Sat.
Where: Tribble A3.
Cost: Free.

Music

The Fountains. The SU Coffeehouse presents this band that is described as a mixture of Neil Young and Woody

Guthrie.
When: 5 p.m. Today
Where: Mag Court
Cost: Free

Jane Powell. This Virginia native boasts a five-octave range and a mastery of many different music genres.
When: 8 p.m. Sat.
Where: Wait Chapel
Cost: \$7

Year of the Arts Celebration. The Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad Symphony will perform composer-in-residence Dan Locklair's piece "At Dawn: A Tone Poem for Narrator, Chorus and Orchestra."
When: 7 p.m. Sept. 28
Where: Wait Chapel
Cost and info: Free. Tickets may be picked up today and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the ticket office in Scales.

ELSEWHERE

Clubs

This Week's Spotlight: The Melvins. A Seattle punk band comes to Cat's Cradle for "A Night with The Melvins."
When: Sun.
Where: Cat's Cradle
Info: (919) 967-9053

Cat's Cradle. Today: Tuscadero with Mayflies USA. Fri.: Charlie Hunter Quartet. \$8. Sat.: Everything with John Thursday. \$5. Sun.: The Melvins. \$7. Tues.: Lets Go Bowling with Cherry Poppin' Daddies. \$7. Wed.: Gibb Droll with Blue Dogs. \$6.
Where: 300 E. Main St., Carrboro
Info: (919) 967-9053

Lizard and Snake Cafe. Today: Jodyglobe. Fri.: Violet Strange. Sat: Skek Ala Shek with Blithe.
Where: 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill
Info: (919) 929-2828

Ziggy's. Fri.: Jump Little Children. Sat.: All Mighty Senators. Tues.: Underfoot. Wed.: Government Mule.
Where: 433 Baity Street
Info: 748-1064

Exhibits

Accounts Southeast: Radcliffe Bradley. An exhibition of mixed-media works by the young Atlanta artist.
When: Through Oct. 2
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Drive
Info: 725-1904

Georgia Blizzard and St. EOM. Two concurrent exhibitions. Blizzard creates dark, expressive clay vessels, plaques and paintings. The exhibit of Eddie Owens Martin (a.k.a. St. EOM) illustrates the concrete and wood land of Pasquaun the late artist created.
When: Through Oct. 2
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Drive
Info: 725-1904

Music

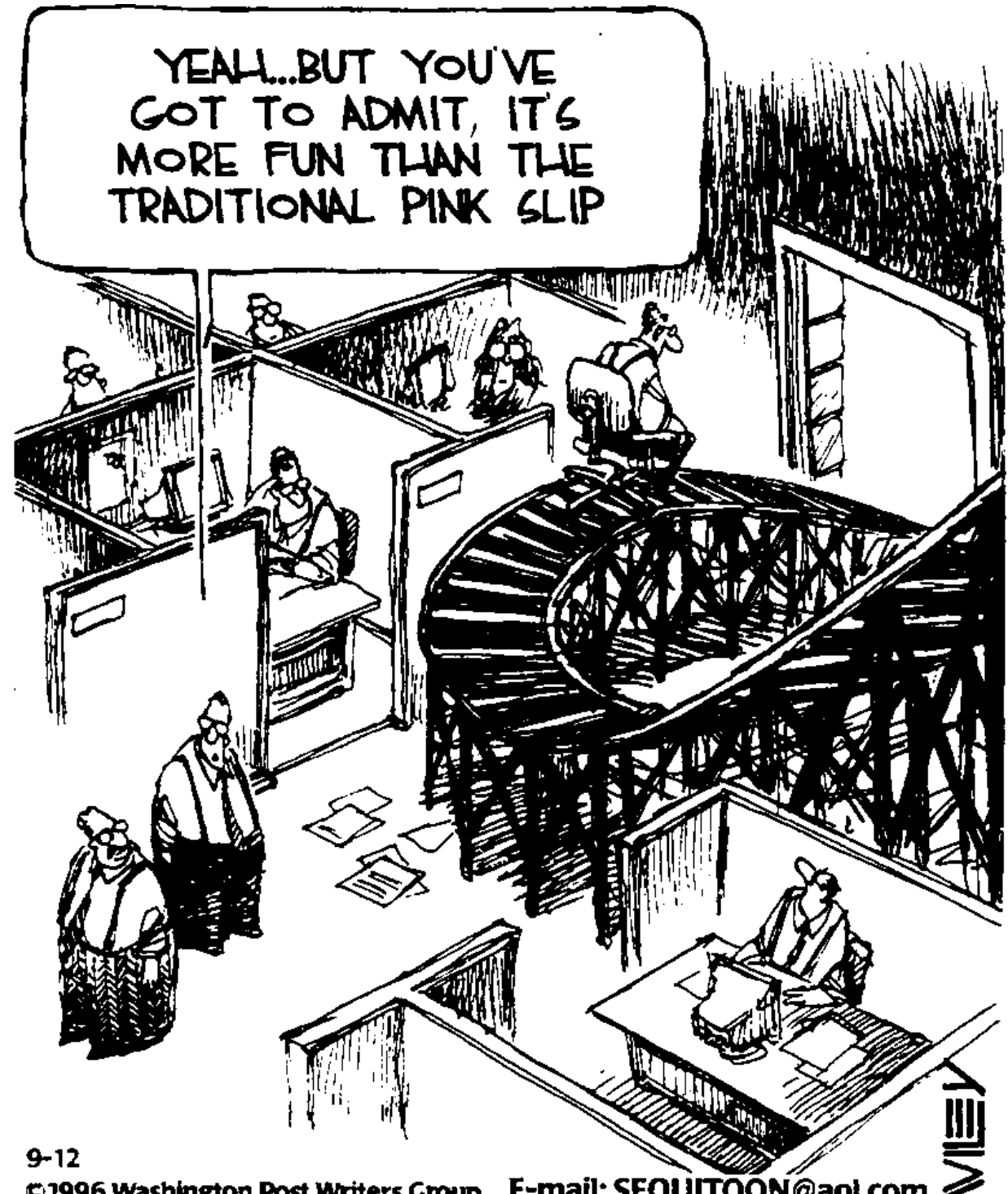
Artisans Day. Dancers, musicians and visual artists will demonstrate their art in Reynolda Village.
When: 10am-5pm Sat.
Where: Reynolda Village, Reynolda Road
Cost and info: Free. 765-0813

Theatre

Cyrano de Bergerac. A heroic comedy based loosely on the life of a historical figure of 17th century France.
When: 8 p.m. Fri., Sat., and Wed.
Where: High Point Theatre, 220 E. Commerce Ave., High Point
Cost and info: \$13 for students. 887-3001

Twelfth Night. A Shakespeare farcical comedy of love, plotting and mistaken identities. Part of the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival.
When: 2 p.m. Sun.
Where: High Point Theatre, 220 E. Commerce Ave., High Point
Cost and info: \$13 for students. 887-3001.

Non Sequitur by Wiley



9-12

©1996 Washington Post Writers Group E-mail: SEQUITOON@aol.com