

Arts & Entertainment

Everclear pleases following

The Big Lebowski weaves film mayhem

By Kelly Murdoch-Kitt
Old Gold and Black Reviewer



Everclear
So Much for the Afterglow
Capital Records

After a nearly three-year hiatus, Everclear has brought its tour through the South again. The band is currently headlining a triple-billed show with Maryland-based Jimmie's Chicken Shack and promising United Kingdom three-piece group Feeder. Drummer Greg Eklund described Everclear's return to the region.

"We haven't been through Richmond or the Carolinas for more than two years," he said. During that time, the band had been making an album, and touring other markets.

They therefore did not know what to expect upon their return, but Eklund generally describes their southern gigs as "phenomenal."

"We've all been asking ourselves why we don't come through here more often!" he laughed, proceeding to describe the fans' hysterics. "It's kind of a catch-22, though. Had we been through here more often, maybe the crowds wouldn't have been as crazy!" he said. "They were great shows; they were fantastic, even though I was sick on the road when we were in the Carolinas."

Eklund briefly described the misery of being ill while on tour (including many sound effects that are difficult to transcribe). The vibe from the crowds was often an effective, if temporary, cure. "Everybody would be having a good time, so that made it worthwhile; for the hour and 20 minutes I was onstage, I felt good, but as soon as I'd come offstage." He makes a horrible face.

As far as touring is concerned, Everclear does not plan to do it forever. "We've talked about it, and we think maybe we have one or two more records, and then we're going to quit while we're on top." Members of Everclear want to finish strong, well-liked and appreciated. "With all the bands I like, it was really their first four of five records, if not fewer, that are good." Eklund explains. "More power to the Rolling Stones and those other bands that can do that sort of thing, but no one goes to see the Rolling Stones live to hear "Bridges to Babylon," they go to hear the old stuff. And we don't want to be a band that contin-

ues past our prime, we want to go out on top."

For now, however, the band is reaching its peak in the United States, and talk quickly turned to touring. Eklund outlined the next leg of the tour: a few more weeks in the United States, then Australia, then England. "That will keep us away from home for over two months."

As for the shows on this tour, most fans are probably wondering about the identity of the extra man onstage. The second guitarist is long-time band-friend and graphic designer, Steve Birch. "He is a great guy. He's been a friend of ours for a long time, and has done all the artwork on the albums and posters. He works really well with the band and makes us sound great," Eklund said.

Although lead singer and guitarist Art Alexakis is capable of recording all of the guitar parts in the studio, he could not play them all live without cloning himself. "With the extra guitar, the sound is really full and it's nice to have an extra guy to beat up on," Eklund said, smiling.

Everclear has not permanently turned four-piece, however. Birch

is not an official member, and, according to Eklund, "There's no reason for him to be. It's still just the three of us that are in the band and will be on the next record."

Also guaranteed with the next record and tour is a continuation of Everclear's positive attitude toward contact with their fans. There are dozens of web sites devoted to Everclear, with a few pages that are particularly note-worthy for fans.

The official Everclear site holds fan club information. A site called Nehalem, which was started by the late Brent Fusco, is complex, with pictures, gossip and guitar tabs. "White Lightning" is an active mailing list and information center.

"Brent was a super fan," Eklund says of Fusco. "He didn't even have a computer. He was creating Nehalem using the computer at work during lunch hour. He did it out of love; put his own money into the site and everything."

When Fusco died suddenly, Nehalem was left as a memorial to him, and the band was moved to dedicate their latest album, *So Much for the Afterglow*, to him. "The great thing about Brent's site is that

it has inspired all these kids to create their own. I just thought that was really cool, and I wanted to support him."

The band is big on meet-and-greets, signing autographs and talking to their fans. Those who become official fan club members get special benefits: there is an official fan club backstage pass that allows the holder to be included in special backstage meet-and-greets for fan club members.

"We just wanted to have something special so that after certain shows, the fans could come back and see us. It's in appreciation of the fans, to say thank you," says Eklund.

"After all, it's kind of cool to be backstage somewhere. I know that, before, I was never backstage at a show ever, my entire life, so I think it would be pretty cool for fans to have that experience. If I had been able to hang out with, say, Adam Ant backstage when I was a kid, it would be a big deal!"

Eklund has also entered his own personalized tour updates, as a way of getting in touch with fans. "I wanted to let people know what goes on in this business, that we don't just roll into town, do a sound check, play a show, and move on. There's a lot more sleep deprivation involved!"

Eklund did not bring his laptop on tour with him this trip, but says he will probably resume the tour updates when he next has an opportunity to be plugged in while on the road. "I haven't posted a tour update in quite some time," he said, with a guilty smile. "I must have 500 e-mails I have yet to read!"

Even with the headaches and pressures, Everclear and Eklund are in it for the experience. "I'm going to have so many stories to tell when I'm old." Here, Eklund put on a crusty, narrative voice and conducted a miniature dialogue: "Ya know, back in '97, I was on tour with Everclear, and it was a hot summer. We played shows at 220 degrees! It was craazy!" All my grandkids will be like, 'Oh no, grandpa, not another rock 'n' roll story!"

He chuckles. "No matter what happens, at the end of the day—the way I look at it—this is just going to make me an interesting grandfather."

By Rad Hallman
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

The Big Lebowski is a welcome change from the waterlogged *Titanic* mania that has swept through the American box office.



The Coen brothers, latest addition to their tangential library of cinematic achievement does not quite live up to *Fargo*, but it comes pretty close. And, once again, there's porn!

The Big Lebowski tells the story of Jeff Lebowski, a.k.a. the Dude, (Jeff Bridges).

The Dude's daily routine consists of buying half-and-half for Russians and meeting his psychotic friends (John Goodman and Steve Buscemi) for a few games of bowling, after smoking a couple of joints.

However, one day after writing a check for his 69 cent jug of half-and-half he goes home to find two extremely stupid men who have come to collect a million dollars from Jeff Lebowski.

They have mistaken the Dude for "the Big Lebowski," a millionaire with a young, buxom wife who likes to gamble at the wrong places.

After getting his head flushed in the toilet, the only thing that really bothers the Dude is his newly urine-stained rug, compliments of the clueless thugs who have just visited him.

The Dude shows some uncharacteristic motivation and goes to the Big Lebowski to get some money for a new rug. He ends up getting hired to drop the ransom money to rescue the kidnapped Mrs. Lebowski.

This simple task escalates into two hours of mayhem as the Dude encounters more excitement than his weed-influenced mind can handle.

The Coen brothers have suc-

The Dude's sequences of unconsciousness add a gloriously satirical element to the movie as he floats over the city or rolls down a bowling lane in the manner of some ethereal sprint on an acid trip.

ceeded in their usual attempt at satirizing some aspect of America while providing a complicated and hilarious plot.

Goodman's Vietnam veteran sidekick to the Dude adds the insane, violence-prone brother-figure that every good film needs.

Buscemi adds his usual subtly bizarre flair to his part as Donny, the Dude's other friend who plays the innocent role of the guy who never quite gets it.

The truly great supporting role in this film is played by the Julianne Moore (Amber Waves in *Boogie Nights*) who plays the disgruntled artist daughter of the Big Lebowski.

It is difficult to summarize a plot that constantly twists into the most bizarre areas of reality without losing the illusory power of a well-written Coen brothers script.

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The Dude's trip to Jackie Treehorn's porn palace makes Larry Flynt and Hugh Hefner seem like amateurs of utopian erotica.

The Big Lebowski is well worth a trip out of the house if you are well-versed in the world of Joel and Ethan Coen. It may not be their best effort, but the Coens' worst is better than the majority of modern comedies.

Although some parts may be less than memorable, such as Sam Elliot's dry, pointless narration, the majority of this film hilariously blends both satire and pure comedy in a candid and colorfully original manner with plenty of nudity and fun expletives.

Simpsons book appeals to fans

By Jeffrey Yoders
U-Wire

Simpsons fans rejoice! Finally a book made for the enjoyment of occasional viewers and hard-core addicts alike. This Simpsons book is guaranteed to have everything you ever wanted to know about the show.

Above all, this is an episode guide beginning with the rare Simpsons shorts featured on *The Tracy Ullman Show* and continuing through last year's eighth

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season. The episode guide includes a complete summary of each episode, movie and music references, hilarious quotes and stuff you might have missed. It even

includes a listing of all the fine print and hidden jokes in each episode.

Guest voices are also listed, and it is finally proven that Michael Jackson did provide the voice for the episode when Homer is committed to a mental institution for wearing a pink shirt.

Every page also has a brief biography of each character in the Simpsons cast, from Ralph Wiggum to Cletus the slack-jawed yokel ("Hot damn! No more sittin' in the dirt at the drive-in!").

The amount of Homer quotes, such as "Son, when you participate in sporting events, it's not whether you win or lose: it's how drunk you get," is impressive.

Also featured in the book is an "Itchy and Scratchy" filmography and Krusty merchandising products like the Krusty-head knife doll and the Krusty cannon toy.

The signs seen around Springfield are especially humorous, such as "Join the army — and see the opposing army!" and "50 million cigarette smokers can't be wrong!"

The book also includes every Simpsons episode created up to May 1997, selected dialogue clips from the shows, Bart's chalkboard sayings, the complete works of Itchy and Scratchy, couch gags from the beginning of shows and best of all, Homer's "Mmmmmmm" 's.

Use this book to see which episodes you have yet to see, or to impress your friends with a vast knowledge of Simpsons trivia. There were several times when I found myself laughing aloud while reading it. "Mmm ... 64 slices of American cheese."

Jeffrey Yoders is a staff writer for The Post at Ohio University.

Giles Harris winners receive cash awards

By Kelly Murdoch-Kitt
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

The department of music held its 21st annual Giles Harris music competition on Feb. 28. Three prizes were offered in the piano competition, which had nine contestants, and three more prizes were awarded in the open competition, which contained all other instrumental categories.

Junior Grace Kim won first place in the piano competition with a Rachmaninoff piece. "It's a very expressive piece. I basically chose it with my professor because she thought it would be a good idea for me to widen my range as a pianist," she said.

As for winning first prize, "It was a big surprise—I didn't expect it at all! I feel like it's a big honor because the level of the competition was so high—everyone played so well that it's almost arbitrary that anyone won at all." Kim said.

Second prize in the piano competition went to senior Holly Jarrell who performed a Prokofiev piece she had prepared for her senior recital a month earlier.

"It's a really great piece; it's a sonata that's supposed to be in three parts, but they all sort of run together. The piece is really exciting and kind of flashy—the most technically challenging piece from my recital," she said.

Jarrell was also surprised by the outcome of the competition. "It had been a bit of a shaky performance; I felt mostly pretty

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Grace Kim
junior

good about the performance, but was a little bit worried. You can never tell what a judge is going to take from your performance since they've never heard you play before," Jarrell said. She added that one of her most frequent concerns in competition was in what context the judges view the performers, and what preconceptions they might have about the piece.

"It was a good competition, every year it has the best student performances, and it's a shame that there's no way to recognize all of the participants, because nobody gets up on the stage without some serious work and practice. The prizes would have been justified if they had gone to anybody," Jarrell said.

The other piano award is called the Ward Vitz prize. It is awarded to the student who exhibits the most pianistic expressiveness.

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