

Versus

Entertainment & Culture at Vanderbilt

NOVEMBER 5—NOVEMBER 11, 2008 VOL. 46, No. 23

GIRL TALK

GREGG GILLIS CHATS WITH VERSUS ABOUT HIS UPCOMING NASHVILLE SHOW ON PAGE 7.

Senior year of high school would have been a lot better with Zac Efron. Find out why on page 3.

Who do you want to see at Rites? See if you agree with these campus hot shots on page 4.

An inappropriate puppet show! And a musical! (Check out our review on page 6.)

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Girl Talk with The Death Seat and CX KIDTRONiK — The Mercy Lounge/Cannery Ballroom

This mash-up master is catching on all over the nation, and now he's coming to jam with Nashvillians. Check out his interview on page 7 if you need any more reason to go — or any more reason to try to scalp a ticket to this sold-out show. (\$45 and up, 9 p.m.)

In The Round with Tim Ryan, Charlie Black, Walt Aldridge and Dana Hunt Black — Bluebird Cafe

This edition of "In The Round" features the writers of songs sung by Phil Vassar ("Last Day of My Life" and "Carlene") and George Strait ("Check Yes or No," "Write This Down"). With so many great tunes going around, any country fan would have a good time. (\$10, 9 p.m.)

Duncan Sheik with Lauren Pritchard — 3rd and Lindsley

His name might not ring a bell at first, but does mid-'90s jam "Barely Breathing" jog your memory? Relive the old days and some musical hits from today with the composer of "Spring Awakening" and its star Lauren Pritchard. (\$18, 8 p.m.)

Peter Bradley Adams with David Berkeley — The Basement

Adams, half of the duo eastmountainsouth, just released his second solo record, "Leavetaking." This groovy singer is joined by the equally pleasant Brooklyn native David Berkeley for a night of smooth songs and gentle melodies. (\$10, 7 p.m.)

Caroline Brewer and The Pnuma Trio — 12th and Porter

Electronica rockers The Pnuma Trio have experimented with sound and style in their early years, and the group just released its first CD: "Character." They'll be paired with folksy songstress Caroline Brewer. (Price TBA, 9 p.m., 114 12th Ave. North)

Matt Jenkins and Jedd Hughes with Sleep Till May, Jamie Davis and Soul Gravy — The Rutledge

This newbie on the country scene has a sound much older than his years (think Josh Turner), and his song "Before Your Gone" is making its way up the charts. Catch him and buddy Jedd Hughes for a night of acoustic goodness celebrating the release of Jenkins' album. (\$6, 8 p.m.)

Madi Diaz — The Basement

This indie folk singer has released her first EP, and she wants her hometown to know about it. Diaz will be joined by other indie pop artists for a show at The Basement. (\$10, 9 p.m.)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Jolie Holland with Herman Dune — Belcourt Theatre

Texan singer-songwriter Jolie Holland brings her signature blend of folk, blues and jazz to Nashville's Belcourt Theatre. She will be performing songs from her three first albums as well as her latest release, "The Living and the Dead." Opening is duo Herman Dune, who describe their style as a combination of surf, grunge and folk. (\$16.50, 8 p.m.)

Murs with Kidz in the Hall — The Mercy Lounge and Cannery Ballroom

Murs, a rapper hailing from Los Angeles, Calif., peddles a unique rap style emphasizing peace, love, unity and having fun. He has traveled the country without a major record deal and is becoming more and more popular with each of his releases. Opens Kidz in the Hall are Versus favorites, having been covered in our publication as an "Artist to Know." Check them out at Cannery for an 18+ show. (\$10 advance/\$15 day of, 9 p.m.)

In the Round with Laurie Kerr, Rick Henry, Clara Oman and Steve Fox — The Bluebird Cafe

The Bluebird Cafe's "In The Round" series brings independent singers and songwriters together for a night featuring Nashville's best up-and-comers. For a relaxing evening of great music, food and company, get a group together to check out this local favorite. (Free, 6:30 p.m.)

Melanie Cannon — The Station Inn

Country crooner Melanie Cannon has worked with artists including George Jones, Sammy Kershaw and Kenny Chesney. With a musical career that started when she was just 14, Cannon is an experienced singer whose show will be sure to please. (\$10, 9 p.m.)

Z-Trip — Exit/In

One of the founders of today's mash-up style, Z-Trip is an influential electronic artist who is a disc jockey at over 100 shows a year. His mixing style defies definition, blending whatever he feels like to create a dance sensation. Follow up Thursday's Girl Talk show with more mash-up mayhem at the Exit/In. (\$20 advance/\$25 day of show, midnight)

The Janissary, Spanish Bombs and Oscar Anthony and the Westfolk Band — The Rutledge

Country/classic rock/jam band Oscar Anthony and the Westfolk Band is a Vanderbilt favorite, playing in the 2008 Rites of Spring. Also performing are The Janissary, a six-piece group that favors an ambient hip-hop sound. (\$5 21+/\$7 18-20, 8:30 p.m.)

Blair Signature Series: The Blair String Quartet — Blair School of Music

Head over to our Blair School of Music for a relaxing evening featuring the Blair String Quartet. The group will be performing works by Haydn, Dvorak and more. (Free, 8 p.m.)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

De Novo Dahl and Ricky Young — Exit/In

De Novo Dahl is a band that blends new Latin sounds and draws inspiration from famed children's author Roald Dahl. Its sound is all at once modern, retro and glam. (\$3, 10 p.m.)

Mozart's Requiem — Schermerhorn Center

The Nashville Symphony hosts what will surely be a memorable night, blending the voices of the esteemed symphony with one of Mozart's final pieces of music. (Tickets TBD, 8 p.m.)

The Grascals — Station Inn

Among other accolades, The Grascals have been distinguished as the International Bluegrass Music Association's Entertainers of the Year. Come check out their modern interpretation of traditional bluegrass and classic country. (\$15, 9 p.m.)

Belmont University Urban/Pop Showcase — Belmont University

Check out this free, entirely student-run production put on by the College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont, which will showcase the talent of students trying to break onto the pop and urban music scenes. (Free, 7 p.m., 2002 Belmont Boulevard)

Special Saturday 8 Off 8th — Mercy Lounge

Hometown musicians, including newcomers and already established acts, gather each week at the Mercy Lounge to play three song sets. You never know who might grace the stage. (Free, 9 p.m.)

Jody Nardone Trio — F. Scott's Restaurant and Jazz Bar

Pianist/vocalist/producer/arranger Jody Nardone transitions seamlessly between playing jazz, rock or pop, and his performance at this elegant eatery will surely have something for everyone. (Free, 7:30 p.m.)

Hip Hot Night with E.T. — Cafe Coco

Local DJs and rappers, as well as touring musicians and breakdancers, grace the stage at this chill, indoor-outdoor spot. Grab a seat and a tasty drink or dinner and enjoy the show. (Free, 11 p.m.)

The Soul Cages "The Music of Sting and The Police" and Pat Buchanan — 3rd and Lindsley

Can't wait for The Police's next reunion tour to stop in Nashville? No matter. Head over to Third and Lindsley to jam with this popular cover band named after one of Sting's most famous albums. (\$10, 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.)

The Regulars

THE RUTLEDGE
410 Fourth Ave. S. 37201
782-6858

MERCY LOUNGE/CANNERY BALLROOM
1 Cannery Row 37203
251-3020

BLUEBIRD CAFE
4104 Hillsboro Road 37215
383-1461

EXIT/IN
2208 Elliston Place 37203
321-3340

STATION INN
402 12th Ave. S. 37203
255-3307

THE BASEMENT
1604 Eighth Ave. S. 37203
254-1604

F. SCOTT'S RESTAURANT AND JAZZ BAR
2210 Crestmoor Road 37215
269-5861

SCHERMERHORN SYMPHONY CENTER
1 Symphony Place 37201
687-6500

3RD AND LINDSLEY
818 Third Ave. S. 37203
259-9891

CAFE COCO
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Versus

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Versus Magazine

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FROM THE EDITOR



I don't know exactly how many conversations I have had in the past week regarding who will grace this week's cover of Versus. It's like people can sense the excitement that's been ruminating in the Versus office for the past two weeks, when we first found out we could score an interview with musician-of-the-hour Girl Talk. For those of you whose lives have yet to be changed by Girl Talk's ingenious mash-ups and mixes of popular rap, classic pop and rock 'n' roll, I highly suggest you run to your computer, log onto his MySpace page and check out what this Pittsburg, Penn., native has got going on.

This stuff is dangerous. Not only will you learn new songs you didn't know before, but you might even grow to appreciate artists that you previously didn't have a taste for or didn't even know about. For example, I found myself thoroughly enjoying the mash-up between YoungBloodz's "Damn" with the instrumental of Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale." I actually said to my roommate, "Isn't this beautiful?" As I bobbed my head to "If you don't give a damn we don't give a damn" well, you know. Long story short? Read the interview on page 7, I beg of you.

What else do we have? A plethora of movie reviews "Zac and Miri," "Rachel Getting Married," "High School Musical 3" — a heap of new bands that you need to check out, and some notable students' and faculty members' pick for what bands they'd like to see at this year's Rites of Spring. Some bands are attainable up-and-comers; others, like Bon Jovi and AC/DC, well, we can dare to dream.

All in all, we just have a bunch of tips designed make your lives better and more enriched. Well, maybe not your lives. But definitely your Wednesday morning biology lecture as you stealthily read what we got goin' on.

Happy procrastinating.

Darcy Newell

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PIC OF THE WEEK



AMELIA SPINNEY/VERSUS MAGAZINE

FICTION

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING, ANY ROAD WILL GET YOU THERE.
— LEWIS CARROLL



Songs of Entitlement

Girl Talk

One of the great things about the arts is when you can find a way to synergistically combine different avenues of expression. Here at Versus, we're trying something new: Every week, we're going to take the name of a song by a featured artist and have one of our writers turn it into a short story. This week we're giving you twice the bang for your buck with two songs from Girl Talk.

CHARLIE ARUTT
Contributor

"Set it off!" And with that, the acorn bombs were let go from their launching spots in the trees. They were intended to drive the unsuspecting students away from our homes and on to other places. We were sick and tired of letting them step all over us and chase us up trees; tired of having to jump limb to limb to avoid the land that was rightfully ours!

And so with one signal, we managed to knock a few of them unconscious and send the rest of them scurrying to the safety of their own dorms. Oh, it felt so good! It gave us time to build more squirrely inventions like acorn trebuchets so we could hit them square on the nose, and gum-filled acorns specially designed for students to step on. That would teach them not to step on our property! Step on it and waste hours of their lives cleaning up the mess. We even learned to be like beavers and make the trees fall on them. The price of losing a few homes was always worth it.

But, alas, we learned we were still the superior species as they laid poisoned acorns in our own trees. We lost so many in our battles with them that we had no choice but to give in and enjoy what we had. Submission aside, we actually have a pretty good life. And so, we are now strong once again, but we have learned our lesson. ☘

HAIKUS

Words to live by in seventeen syllables

Only Halloween
Could take something like crayons
And make them slutty.

What if Obama
Pulled a Vanderbilt football
And choked last minute???

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

"Summer Smoke." That's what he called it. And honestly, it tasted a little bit like a muggy night on my back porch. The grasshoppers quietly whispering their verses and the wind dancing in the rose garden, I light up my spliff so that no one else would see. My parents wouldn't understand. They loved to garden, but they wouldn't allow a different kind of plant in their house. I guess that's what happens when you're raised right outside of Knox County and your father is a pastor. But honestly, if God didn't want us to smoke it then why did he make it in the first place?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not some kind of drug addict. I just like to take advantage of all of God's gifts, in moderation mind you. Maybe I just like the way it makes my brain feel like an ant farm, or maybe it's just the taste. Regardless, tonight isn't about my legal concerns or my parent's unwavering Protestant-repressed sentiments. This is about taking a break.

I take another drag and open the screen door. Sauntering down the steps, I remember why I love this place. The romantics had it right, nature really can restore the soul. I don't mean that in the Cure sense, "My soul is a pit of black despair without you" kind of way. I mean it in the slow erosion of a man's resolve. Resolve to do things right and to keep himself clean. Resolve to live the way he wants to. Resolve to be the man his mother convinced him he is. Man, this stuff is good. No wonder it was so expensive.

Suddenly, the screen door swung open, I threw down my roach and turned in horror. I couldn't quite make out the face that peered at me from the lit-up porch. I took a few steps back to the porch and tried to compose myself ... ☘

ENTERTAINMENT

MOVIES

Take your date to a porno

BRANDON HERIFORD

Culture Editor

On Saturday evening I traveled to see Kevin Smith's newest concoction — "Zack and Miri Make a Porno." As last week's feature interview with Smith proved, the director's unique and comedic personality lends itself primarily to the production of outrageous flicks, ignoring the dreaded exception of "Jersey Girl." I personally consider myself to be somewhat of a Kevin Smith snob; during high school my friends and I would routinely quote "Mallrats," and "Chasing Amy" certainly rates in my top five movies of all time. Nevertheless, "Zack and Miri Make a Porno" is a truly hilarious Smith work that will almost certainly rate as one of his best works of all time.

"In Zack and Miri," Smith pairs his directing talents with the extremely popular Seth Rogen (known for his performances in the instant classics "Knocked Up" and "Pineapple Express"), who seems to be incapable of making a sub-par comedy. The plot of "Zack and Miri" is unique, to say the least. Zack (Rogen) and Miri (Elizabeth Banks of "40-Year-Old Virgin" and "Wet Hot American Summer") are unfortunately stuck in dead-end jobs with no chance of paying their ever-increasing utility bills. Following their depressing 10-year high school reunion, Zack brilliantly decides they should make a porno to pay off their debt.

Obviously there has to be a love interest in the movie — it is Kevin Smith after all. Although Zack and Miri have lived together for nearly a decade, they have never had sex, or even kissed, for that matter. Therefore, while

they decide to star in the originally "Star Wars" themed porno, they agree that their sex scene must remain a strictly platonic way of climbing out of the poor house. This clearly does not happen, and thus the romantic tension within "Zack and Miri Make a Porno" is born.

However, the true comedic genius of the movie rests in its supporting cast. Craig Robinson, of "The Office," has a truly breakthrough performance as the producer of Zack and Miri's coffee shop-themed porno, aptly titled "Swallow my Cockuccino." Also, Traci Lords, who stars as Bubbles, is a past real porn star who has risen to fame. Smith once again relies on Jeffrey Anderson of "Clerks" and "Clerks 2" to play the porno's director, who may or may not be "frosted," as he deems it, during his attempt to film the action from a unique angle.

"Zack and Miri Make a Porno" is an extremely raunchy movie, filled with nudity, graphic language and human excrement. It was originally rated NC-17 by the MPAA, and thankfully Smith successfully appealed this rating so that it could be released in its original form. Even though the film may walk a thin line of appropriateness, it also employs some romantic, chick-flick moments, which can get kind of boring. Nevertheless, I cannot encourage you to see this movie enough; it was well worth the student-discount ticket and very fun to watch in a crowded theater. In all honesty, the only movie more enjoyable than "Zack and Miri Make a Porno" may be an actual porno, but I'm pretty sure you won't be seeing a review of one of those in Versus anytime soon. ☼

Seth Rogen & Elizabeth Banks made a movie so titillating that we can only show you this drawing.



Zack and Miri make a porno

zackandmiri.com

MOVIES

What time is it? 'High School Musical' stars graduate with 'HSM3'

ALLENA BERRY

Staff Writer

I'm just going to lay it all out there. I saw "High School Musical 3: Senior Year," or "HSM3" for those truly die-hard fans, this past weekend. Now, as I reflect on my experience in-theater, despite all the movie's obvious flaws and trivialities, I have to say — I think I liked it.

I entered the theater expecting nothing short of the cinematographic genius that was "HSM" and its sequel, "HSM2." I'm glad to say that the boys and girls of East High delivered.

Let me set up the scene. It's senior year, as the title implies. The movie opens with the illustrious Troy Bolton (i.e. tween heartthrob Zac Efron) sweating profusely on the basketball court. The East High Wildcats are trailing by some ridiculous amount and return to their locker rooms at halftime feeling a bit dejected.

However, after a quick pep-talk by their team captains (Zac and gypal Corbin Bleu), the team appears ready to take on the world ... and sing. A quick 16 minutes and an uncomfortable Troy and Gabriella (the oh-so-innocent Vanessa Hudgens) moment later, and the Wildcats have found themselves the state champions ... yet again. Thereafter, a slew of surprisingly predictable montages showcase what is sure to be a delightfully forgetful senior year.

The movie skips along with scenes highlighting Troy, Then Gabriella. Then Troy and Gabriella. And then there's a full-cast number where the

rest of the cast gets to defend their ridiculously inflated paychecks. And then Troy some more. This fun "Zac Efron Show" ends with the six stars singing at graduation about how super fun it was to enjoy high school together in a song appropriately titled "High School Musical."

Let's be honest here, people. You don't go to see a movie like "High School Musical 3" in order to unravel the deep mysteries of life. You don't go for great acting, great singing or a great story line (I'm sorry, but "HSM3" offers none of these). You don't even go because you can relate to the characters (no one's senior year was that jovial). You go because it's fun, you can laugh about it later and well, pretty people on a big screen are even bigger, prettier people.

So just go see it. You know you want to. I promise I won't judge. ☼

WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3 SENIOR YEAR
ONLY IN THEATERS
OCTOBER 24TH!



Zac Efron as Troy Bolton

disneygo.com

MOVIES

'Rachel Getting Married' is a heartfelt celebration

HOLLY MEEHL

Staff Writer

As I returned home for fall break, I was eager to go see some of the many promising movies coming out this fall. One I was particularly excited for was Anne Hathaway's newest film, "Rachel Getting Married." I expected to see a comedy with a bit of a darker, dramatic side showcasing Hathaway's talent beyond romantic comedies. I did, in fact, leave the theater with a greater appreciation of Hathaway's broad talent as an actress. However, instead of leaving feeling as if I had just seen a dramatic comedy, I emerged from the theater feeling the weight of an extremely effective film.

"Rachel Getting Married" is directed by Jonathan Demme and tells the story of Kim (Hathaway), a young woman who leaves her drug rehab program to visit her family and attend her sister's wedding. Kim's sister, Rachel (Rosemarie DeWitt) appears, at first, pleased with her sister's return. Kim's father, Paul (Bill Irwin), is eager to watch over his damaged daughter, and tries

to protect Kim from Rachel's scorn. The story stresses Kim's odd place in her dysfunctional family, as her entire family has gathered for Rachel's wedding. Eventually she reveals something tragic and shocking from her past that seems to be the cause of many of her problems. Although much of the plot is charming in its slew of wedding activities, ranging from an eclectic talent show to a dishwasher loading competition between Paul and Rachel's fiance, there is an extremely dark and somber side to the film. The secret Kim reveals had the woman next to me in the theater sobbing and made me feel for the characters in the story as if they were members of my own family.

The camera work in this film is unique in that, at times, it makes you want to be sick, but is also effective in making you feel as if you were at the wedding. The entire film is shot with a hand-held camera, giving it a documentary-like feel. It is almost as if the audience is standing right next to the family members, watching and documenting everything that occurs in this hectic

weekend. Although at first this technique made me dizzy, I eventually got used to it, as it allows the viewer to feel close to the family and to the action of the film.

One of the most notable aspects of this film is Hathaway's performance. In my mind I see her as the awkward yet lovable teenager from "The Princess Diaries," or the clumsy, yet maturing young woman in "The Devil Wears Prada." But in this film she transforms into a misunderstood, domineering, problematic sister and recovering drug addict whose powerful story demands empathy. In this film, Hathaway proves that she can go beyond the cookie-cutter parts played by women her age. She can be violent, cynical, witty and damaged. Irwin, Dewitt and Debra Winger (who plays Kim's and Rachel's mother) also give stellar performances as a supporting cast.

Overall, "Rachel Getting Married" leaves you chilled but wanting more from this dysfunctional family that could easily be your own, and for that reason, is definitely worth seeing. ☼

MOVIES

'W.' stands for wasted opportunity

CHRIS GEARING

Features Editor

I would first like to preface this article with a mild confession: I am a liberal. I know — sue me. But I felt like it was important to clear that up before we go any further together. Just as I tried to approach this film with a fair hand, try not to jump to conclusions about how I feel about this flick. With that being said, Stone's latest controversial film seems to fall short, and in the end, drops the ball.

The film focuses on the story of our illustrious 43rd president, George W. Bush (as played by Josh Brolin). Stone takes us back to W.'s youth: booze, women and fast times. He also wants to portray the series of jobs that President Bush held before he decided on politics, mostly in a bid to discredit and poke at the protagonist. The film also intersperses scenes from President Bush's first term and shows the slippery slope that lead to the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. There it is, with little to no spin.

You may be asking yourself, "Chris, shouldn't you be doing cartwheels in the theater when a movie is making fun of President Bush for two plus hours?" My problem lies in a simple

fact: Oliver Stone at some point stopped being a director and film maker and decided to become a muckraker. He chooses some of W.'s worst moments in his life and shows his hard partying, inability to hold a job and apparent stupidity. However, the film does not show any uplifting or redeeming scenes from the President's life (i.e., his heroism and leadership after the events of Sept. 11, his keen ability to campaign and his political acumen, etc.). In the end, the film feels incomplete and like a series of cheap shots. The President's approval ratings are the lowest in the history of the poll — no need to add insult to injury.

Stone paints a picture of an irresponsible, brash and stupid President Bush in his latest film "W." However for such a politically charged time, maybe a cheap shot was not the way to go. Also, this movie could have been the testament and public trial of one of the most controversial and unpopular presidents of all time. Just portraying all events of the past eight years would have painted a pretty bad picture, Mr. Stone. Just ask the aforementioned poll numbers. ☼

In Theaters Nov 7

"Disturbing, eerie, and ultimately redemptive."
- HM Magazine

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MUSIC

*"I'm not a woman —
I'm a force of nature."
— Courtney Love*

SETLIST

TODAY

Did you think Savannah was the only haunted city of the South? The **Haunted Downtown Nashville walking tour** will take you to the best haunts in Music City near Ryman Auditorium, the State Capitol and Printer's Alley. It's only \$15 for the full tour! Call (888) 844-3999 for more info.

THURSDAY, NOV. 6

Do you love Japanese cinema? Do you love Westerns? Well when these two worlds combine, things can only get better. **Takashi Miike's** latest opus is playing at the Belcourt, and is totally worth a look. Quentin Tarantino agrees.

FRIDAY, NOV. 7

Frank Caliendo (from "Frank TV") will be performing his stand up routine at TPAC's Andrew Jackson Hall (505 Deaderick Street). \$40 is a small price to pay to see one of America's most beloved comics and his "dead on" impressions.



news.bbc.co.uk

Vandy's choice: Rites of Spring



telegraph.co.uk

Alex Kuley, '10, WRVU DJ

1. Franz Ferdinand: An alternative act with mainstream success that would provide a lot of energy as a headliner.
2. Vampire Weekend: What about this preppy, Ivy-League band isn't made for Vanderbilt?
3. Santogold: A dance-oriented singer in the mold of M.I.A. who would be tons of fun live.

Sam Daddeh, '11, Pi Kappa Alpha DJ

1. MGMT: Currently one of the hottest bands around. There's a lot of buzz around them, and rightfully so.
2. Third Eye Blind: Everyone loves some nostalgia from their elementary school days.
3. Bon Jovi: One of the greatest and most successful bands of all time. Truly legendary.

AJ Ogilvy, '11, basketball player

1. All Time Low: This pop-punk band from Maryland is known for its intense live shows that get the crowd really involved. Its catchy, up-beat music is really fun to listen to — the track "Dear Maria, Count Me In" is a good place to start.
2. We The Kings: This group's live show is amazing, and they really love audience participation. Their popular single "Check Yes Juliet" has helped raise the band to stardom. If you don't know it, check it out.
3. Every Avenue: Rites would be the perfect show for this Michigan band. They make really great music that's very worth listening to — check out their single "Where Were You."

Daniel Novick, '09, campus musician

1. Cake: I saw these guys live in Memphis a few years ago, and they put on a great show. On top of their great set list, which includes both their own unique original material and some very interesting covers, they have a fantastic stage presence.
2. Franz Ferdinand: Intensity, passion, driving beats, great grooves, hooky guitar parts, catchy lines that make the audience want to sing along. ... Everything about this band makes them amazing and a raging choice for this year's Rites.
3. North Mississippi Allstars: Being from Memphis, I grew up listening to the bluesy, rockin' grooves of this power trio. Lead guitarist Luther Dickinson has been on tour with the Black Crowes the last year or so and is even more amazing as a frontman with the Allstars.



mychemicaltoilet.com



philspector.files.wordpress.com



photobucket.com



usounds.com

Sean Tierney, '09, Editor Emeritus of The Slant, resident funny guy

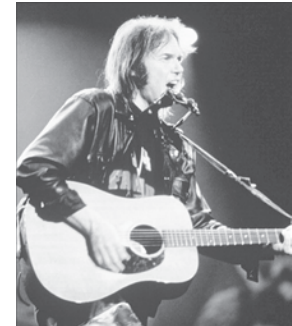
1. Wilco: Because Coldplay would bankrupt VPB, I can see Iron & Wine this semester, and Fleetwood Mac is past retirement. Oh yeah, and it's Wilco.
2. Cave Singers: Their folksy music has early-evening-beer-on-Alumni-Lawn written all over it, and this gives me more street cred among overly image-conscious indie types than requesting Vampire Weekend would.
3. Ambulance LTD: Their album "LP" has stayed in my rotation throughout college.



folioweekly.com

Jen Gunderman, history of rock professor

1. Neil Young: Because I am humiliated to admit that I've never seen him live, although he's one of my all-time favorites.
2. AC/DC: Because I was not online during the four minutes that they sold out their January show at the Sommet Center. *S#%!
3. Bettye Lavette: Because this great lady of soul will knock your socks off.



captainsdead.com

Laura Picard, '12, Versus music writer/token

freshman

1. Sufjan Stevens: Perhaps playing at Rites 2009 will inspire him to come up with a new album for his stunted 50 states project. I can see it now: Come on! Feel the ... Tennessee ...
2. Polysics: Polysics is a Japanese "technicolor pogo punk" band — I like to think of them as a reincarnation of Devo on crack. They rock hard, play loud and make broken English endearing. The real question should be: Why wouldn't you want them at Rites of Spring?
3. The Ting Tings: They're cute, they're fun and their beats make it impossible not to dance along. A word of caution: Prolonged exposure to Ting Tings tunes may cause you to keep dancing, even after the show's over and there's no music playing. Side effects include embarrassment, sore legs and irrepressible laughter.



harpmagazine.com

Jonny Snider, '10, former Music Group member

1. Girl Talk: I've always been a huge fan. Girl Talk is performing in Nashville next week but still a great addition to any concert as one of the great mash-up artists of our time.
2. Seu Jorge: Would be great for a mellow afternoon slot. He does David Bowie covers in Portuguese — probably one of the chilliest-sounding artists around.
3. The Flaming Lips: Known not only for their music but the quality of their live performances, which includes costumes, puppets, projectors and confetti.



coachella.com

The official Girl Talk afterparty: Club Sportag

AVERY SPOFFORD
Music Editor

Bummed that you're one of the hundreds of Vandy students that didn't get their Girl Talk ticket before the show sold out?

Never fear — even if you're not willing to pay \$400 for a Craigslist ticket or brave the crowds of scalpers that will be camped out around the Mercy Lounge on Thursday, you can still party with the Girl Talk crowd and get your electro fix.

For a \$5 cover charge, electronic music fans can join the post-show revelry at the Mercy Lounge's official Girl Talk afterparty. Local disc jockeys Club Sportag, a four-piece

electronic group best known for insane shows and frenetically fun dance parties, is headlining the party for the third installment of their "Club Sportag" party series. Also playing is legendary local DJ Justin Kase, described by the Nashville Scene as our city's "premier electro-hustler." With a lineup including two of Nashville's hottest local electronic acts, there's no doubt that the party won't stop when Girl Talk's Gregg Gillis leaves the stage.

So, for those of you unlucky enough to be missing out on the Girl Talk action, pregame in your dorm room while listening to "Night Ripper" and "Feed The Animals" and then head over to the afterparty to dance away your sorrows. Doors open at 11, and the show is 21+. ☞



Myspace.com

Review: of Montreal — 'Skeleton Lamping'

It's the most delightful skeleton in my closet.

LAURA PICARD
Staff Writer

Many music critics have ragged on of Montreal's newest and boldest album for being over the top. Yet the aural orgy of funk, punk and disco punk — the quintessence of "Skeletal Lamping" — is what keenly disproves the whole notion of "less is more" by taking "more" to the extreme.

Picking up where "Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer?" left off, frontman Kevin Barnes drives the six-piece band into an excessive paradise. It's shed any veneer of elitist inhibition to reveal a sassy, sexy monster of a record that is too catchy to resist. Taking obvious influences from the likes of Elton John and Prince, "Skeletal Lamping" is like an eclectic montage of the kings of pop, rejuvenated with a shot of Botox to keep it spanking fresh in the wake of the naughts.

But that doesn't mean that "Skeletal Lamping" lacks dimension. For example,

the flamboyant flurry of tracks like "An Eluardian Instance" is tempered by the poignant piano-infused lyrics of "Touched Something's Hollow" — that is to say, the extreme, electric energy of the entire album is grounded in a heartfelt essence. A stereotypically hipster "retrophiliac" irony not only prevails but shamelessly celebrates itself. This might seem unsightly at first glance, but the real question is, why should it hide? It is refreshingly genuine compared to the pretentious, dogmatic reticence that blatantly dominates your average indie record.

The utter glut of concentrated sound may be overwhelming at times, but the irresistibly danceable tracks of "Skeletal Lamping," its cheeky, unaffected attitude toward hipsterism, and its (overlooked) range of sounds and emotion are what give its minor sins of excess the ultimate redemption. ☞

The band cues a 'Skeletal' misstep.

CHARLIE ARUTT
Staff Writer

With one look at the busy and innovative cover art of of Montreal's latest CD, "Skeletal Lamping," you might be expecting another masterpiece from frontman Kevin Barnes and the rest of of Montreal.

Unfortunately, after the pristine disco/dance pop glory of "Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer?," of Montreal seems to have taken a step backward on "Skeletal Lamping." Where there was an album that was one cohesive piece, there are now a bunch of smaller samples of songs glued together. The only overarching theme is that of Kevin Barnes' endless musings on sexuality from varying perspectives. From a prostitute to a prude, Kevin Barnes' alter ego, Georgie Fruit, who first appeared on "Hissing Fauna," seems to be here for good. The extravagance is almost enough to choke the listener.

All of this being said, there are plenty of pop

hooks to be found in the album. If only there were less hooks that spanned less genres so that they would be easier to remember and digest. Instead of taking ideas that triumph because they are so catchy, of Montreal lets them fade into the distance. One moment that does stand out for its clarity is the first single and last track of the album, "Id Engager," where of Montreal seems quite focused on making an honest pop song.

This album still works in the context of great background music as a party. With all of its dance-ready beats, it can be a lot of fun. The problem just comes when focusing on the album itself. The bottom line here, despite considering the album a general misstep, is that of Montreal still sounds like of Montreal. And, of course, it is always interesting to see how their overblown themes play out in a live setting as their popularity keeps on growing. ☞

SATURDAY, NOV. 8

It's like Mardi Gras, only in November and with barbecue. **Nashville's Beer, Bourbon & BBQ festival** starts at noon at the Municipal Auditorium, and the event will run until 6 p.m. In addition to the highlights, there'll be cigar smoking and plenty of live music to go around. Tickets start at \$15.

SUNDAY, NOV. 9

Local bands will unite this weekend in the culmination of **Battle of the Bands** at Exit/In. Various groups will be playing all day, so stop by when you're ready for a study break (but the later you wait, the better the music is likely to be). The ticket price is still to be announced.

MONDAY, NOV. 10

Tucson, Ariz., native **Calexico** is bringing its alternative/folk/country sound to town in a show at The Mercy Lounge. Check out the tunes at The Mercy Lounge. Tickets are \$15, and the show starts at 8 p.m., with a follow-up set at 9 p.m. with The Acorn.

TUESDAY, NOV. 11

The Opry has been entertaining fans for awhile now, and tonight will be no exception. The **Eli Young Band, Jack Ingram, Suzy Bogguss, Del McCoury** and **Lorrie Morgan** will take to the stage that is revered by all in country music. The show starts at 7 p.m., and tickets range from \$24 to \$51.

SOUNDTRACK TO THE ISSUE



We at Versus have excellent taste in music. Below, the editors share what tracks we've been spinning as we create the glory you're holding in your hands.

1. **"MAKE IT MINE"**
Jason Mraz
2. **"IT'S OVER"**
John Legend feat. Kanye West
3. **"NOBODY"**
Ne-Yo
4. **"5 TIMES OUT OF 100"**
Hot Hot Heat
5. **"LISTEN UP"**
Valencia
6. **"JULIET"**
LMNT
7. **"PLAY YOUR PART (PT. 2)"**
Girl Talk
8. **"YOUNG PILGRIMS"**
The Shins
9. **"NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP"**
Rick Astley
10. **"BULLET"**
Rhymefest feat. Citizen Cope

D.C.'s new rap representative

SHEMSI FREZEL
Staff Writer

"Seinfeld," the infamous sitcom about nothing, proved that life's mundane experiences can be very entertaining, and Washington, D.C., rapper **Wale** took notice. The television series is Wale's inspiration for his latest work, "The Mixtape about Nothing," and just like the Seinfeld writers before him, Wale finds much ground to cover.

The introduction of the tape is similar to Jerry Seinfeld's stand-up routines that began each episode. In "The Mixtape," he discusses topics and catchphrases from the show that have seeped

into popular culture. If Wale's music had a mission statement, it would be to draw hip-hop attention to the nation's capital. He often calls out locales not readily associated with music, like D.C., Maryland and Virginia. A product of his environment, Wale fuses the percussive go-go music of D.C. into his sound. Wale has been working to change the hip-hop landscape.

In the last three years, Wale has released five mixtapes, all of which are available for download free of charge. Wale hopes that those who download the mixtapes will be so impressed that they'll purchase his album.

Not only does he take risk with the dissemination of his music, the actual music he makes is anything but safe: He has sampled Justice's "D.A.N.C.E.," Lily Allen's "Smile" and M.I.A.'s "Boyz."

Wale is an atypical rapper from his artistic inspiration to his mixtape philosophy, and these anomalies add interest to his music that should intrigue larger audiences. If his previous work is any indication, listeners should expect quirky references, laugh-out-loud metaphors, thoughtful lyrics and perhaps finally a Grammy for a rapper from the nation's capital. ☼



formatmag.com

Deerhoof delivers at Mercy Lounge

ANA ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

Deerhoof's performance at Mercy Lounge last Thursday proved me wrong in thinking they were just another obscure indie group. Their good nature and sense of humor carried through the show after the crowd's initial callout, "Deerhoof! Deerhoof! Hoof! Hoof! Hoof!"

Guitarist Ed Rodriguez rocked all over the stage while Greg Saunier enhanced the sound with the rhythmic beat of his drums. John Dietrich, joining Rodriguez on guitar, added a calm but

intense feel to the music. The dramatic power of their instruments was equaled by Satomi Matsuzaki's childlike voice and appealing quirkiness.

Matsuzaki jumped on top of the giant speakers, held her guitar just out of the crowd's reach, and playfully used a giant lion head prop to amuse the audience. Matsuzaki even invited a fan to improvise dance moves on stage, while Deerhoof followed with music.

Fan are unfazed by Deerhoof's changing band members. Their musical quality has remained the same, and none of

the present members plan on leaving any time soon. A quick review of the group's official Web site tells of Deerhoof's standing popularity in both the United States and overseas in Europe. Though Deerhoof writes its own music in English, Japanese and Spanish, it sometimes creates vocal noises in place of words.

"The pleasure of their music comes more from their sound than their lyrics," said one fan. "Depending on the song, either her voice or their instruments are more valuable to the ear." This is what sets Deerhoof apart

from other groups labeled as "art rock." Fans find it difficult to describe the sound, as it blends pop, rock and electric all at once. Though Deerhoof released "Offend Maggie" in October 2008, the consensus among fans is that their best album is still 2007's "Friend Opportunity." One fan stated, "The difference is that 'Offend Maggie' has more of a jazzy feel to it. 'Friend Opportunity' was experimental, although not as much as their earlier albums." The show featured newer songs such as "The Tears and Music of Love" and "Chandelier

Searchlight" as well as older tracks like "The Perfect Me" and "Twin Killers."

At the end of the show, Saunier spoke out with the group's closing commentary: "We wanted to extend our thanks to someone else, and that 'someone' is not actually one person. It's a group of people you can meet later, who are kind of standing all around you nearby. It's the audience. Thanks for making this so fun." I'm sure I'm not the only one that wishes I could have thanked Deerhoof for making my night. ☼



organart.demon.co.uk

funnypotatoes.com

Vinyl makes a comeback

CHARLIE ARUTT
Staff Writer

It's making a comeback, albeit a small one. Vinyl is becoming more popular among our age group, more commonly known as the "iPod generation." Among the infinite sea of mp3 players, there seems to be more and more kids who just seem to prefer the older, clunkier way of listening to music.

There are a few reasons why vinyl has a growing following these days. The first of these has to do with the way new music is being released on vinyl. Often, when you purchase a record, it comes with a code

for a download so you can also load the music onto your iPod. This comes in handy, as you can take the music with you while exercising or on a road trip while still enjoying the "vinyl experience" in the confines of your home, or, perhaps for most of us, in our dorm rooms.

What is this vinyl experience, you ask? To me, it is the ability to have the physical music in my hands, to be able to take a record out of its sleeve and place it on a turntable and press play. It makes me more conscious of the music that I'm listening to, because the record stops



blog.makezine.com

after the 15 to 20 minutes on one side, making me aware of exactly how much music was just played. And then, of course, the record has to be put away, unlike digital music, but that's just a small detail. Some say that vinyl also has better sound quality, because it takes the sound waves imprinted on the record and brings them straight to your stereo or headphones.

Of course, there are also a few cons to vinyl. You do actually need to take care of it and make sure that it doesn't get scratched. You might also need a record player, and they can be rather expensive to get one of decent quality. And lastly, having a record player takes up space, which, seeing as most of us don't have too much to spare, could be a problem. That being said, I still see the rising interest in vinyl as testament that it is something worth checking out. ☼



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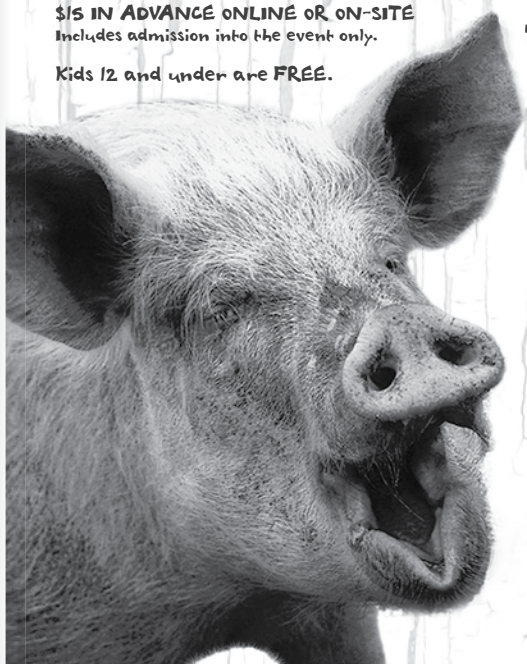
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ART

THEATER

'Sesame Street' grows up — and it's splendid

"Avenue Q" is a different kind of puppet show.

SARA GAST

Managing Editor

A musical with a love story, philanthropic purpose and inappropriate puppets? There wasn't much more I needed to hear about the Tony Award-winning "Avenue Q" to force me (OK — I wasn't really forced) into seeing the Broadway show when the traveling cast made a stop in Nashville.

I knew I found what I needed when the first number came on: "What do you do with a B.A. in English?/It sucks to be me." As an English major who is not looking forward to another holiday season of artfully dodging that great "what are you doing with your life" question, I really understood what Princeton was saying. Our bright-eyed leading man sets out on his not-so-bright-eyed future, and he stumbles across Avenue Q, filled with puppet friends and a couple of humans. We meet the failed comedian Brian and his fiancée Christmas Eve. Next door are Nicky and his Republican investment banker roommate Rod,



and porn addict Trekkie Monster, kindergarten teacher Kate and superintendent Gary Coleman round out the mix. Princeton grabs the spare apartment on the block and viola — the adventure begins.

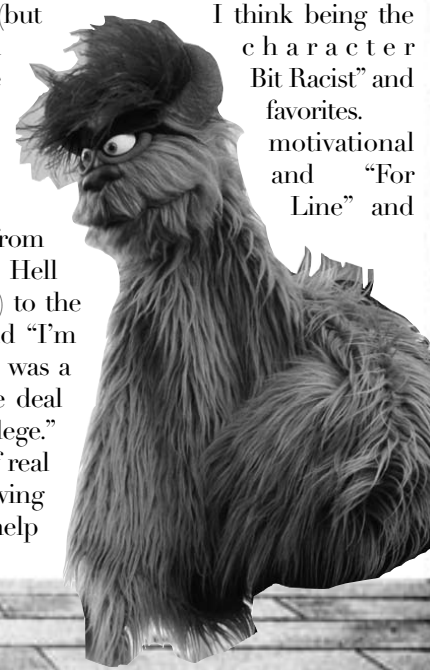
The gang on Avenue Q go through the ups and downs in life (but with that sing-along flare, of course). They fall in love, try to figure out what they are doing with their lives and realize that it feels really good to help others. This was what set "Avenue Q" apart from other musicals for me — at the end of the show, the cast passed a hat for donations, which went toward various local and national philanthropies. You could laugh and feel good about yourself at the same time!

As my playbill so conveniently told me, the cast has a better-than-average resume. The seven main actors have been in numerous other performances,

some even in other "Avenue Q" casts, and many have had Broadway fame. Carey Anderson, who operates Kate Monster and femme fatale Lucy, stole the show for me, but she was strongly supported by Robert McClure (Princeton and Rod) and the rest of the cast. I feel the play takes a moment to catch on to; the puppets aren't always held by the same actors if it's a multi-puppet scene, which threw me off at times, but that problem probably wasn't helped by the distance my very cheap seats were from the stage.

As a self-declared musical aficionado, I'm going to say the songs weren't stuck-in-your-head-for-days great, but the variety, humor and, erm, more obscene nature of the numbers made up for where the lyrics or performance lacked. The show deals with the ugly issues of the real world, like racism, being gay, relationships and finding your "purpose," but it gives them a light-hearted twist that somehow works. You can't help agreeing with what they say. "If You Were Gay" set the tone for the show right away (but second number didn't allow for enough development), and "Everyone's a Little 'Schadenfreude'" were two of my favorites.

The lineup varied from the ("There is Life Outside Your Apartment Now") to the sad ("There's a Fine, Fine The More You Ruv Someone") and from the weird ("You Can Be as Loud as the Hell You Want (When You're Making Love)") to the weirder ("The Internet is for Porn" and "I'm Not Wearing Underwear Today"). And it was a number toward the end that sealed the deal for me: "I Wish I Could Go Back to College." It's a musical that talks about the stuff of real life — about living and loving and growing up — and it does it in song. You can't help but love it. ☘



I think being the character "Bit Racist" and motivational and "For Line" and

FOOD

Savarino's Cucina is a hidden gem

LISA KARVELLAS

Staff Writer

I knew that in leaving the Northeast to go to school in Tennessee I would be leaving behind snowy winters, the New Jersey Turnpike and 24-hour diners. However, I did not expect to leave behind good, genuine Italian food, which has left an immeasurable void in my life.

This, of course, seems like a reason for great sorrow to many Vandy students' palates, however, there is at last an exception. Savarino's Cucina is authentic Italian cuisine that surpasses chain-restaurant quality or establishments such as Maggiano's, Amerigo or even the dreaded Papa John's.

Corrado Savarino is the Sicilian-born owner and executive chef who began cooking when he was 15 years old. He then moved to Brooklyn,

N.Y., where his small Italian bakery thrived. Of course, any food establishment that yields success in the Big Apple is a great accomplishment to any chef. So why did Corrado pack his knives and move to Nashville of all places? According to him, the "rat race" in New York was too much stress for his small, family-oriented business, and he believed that Nashville would embrace his dream restaurant.

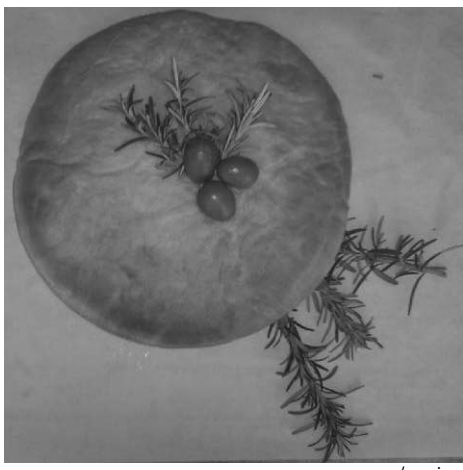
As soon as you enter the yellow stucco building plopped in between McDougal's and The Dog of Nashville on Belcourt Avenue, you will drink up the aromas of freshly baked bread and sauteed garlic and feel quenched by the authentic Italian ambiance that has been missing from your college existence. But the ambiance is not Savarino's Cucina's sole attraction; each dish is made as the orders are placed, no earlier. Furthermore, every single item is made from scratch, from the sauce, to the lasagna and even down to the bread crumbs. Although this results in a slightly longer wait than (sigh) Fazoli's, it is well worth your time. The layered eggplant parmigiana sandwich is oozing with salty cheese and savory marinara sauce on a soft, freshly baked roll for only \$7.95. The bucatini with carbanaro sauce is a heaping plate of thick, hollowed spaghetti with crisp chunks of pancetta, sweet sauteed onions and a rich, cheesy, sauce for just \$9.95.

But the prepared food is not the only treat Savarino's has to offer your garlic-dependent taste buds; your sweet tooth will be satisfied as well. There is a glass case filled with every Italian cookie and pastry you could dream of, each homemade and perfected by Corrado. There is even a section where they sell specialty Italian cheeses, pastas, drinks, olive oils and other ingredients that you will likely not find elsewhere in Nashville.

I know you have been depressed about the lack of marinara in your life, but keep your chin up. Savarino's Cucina is an affordable and delicious alternative to that processed, unknown-animal meatball you are about to pop in your mouth. Prego. ☘



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ART

Displaying de Balincourt

ANA ALVAREZ

Staff Writer

"Where were you when the World Trade Center was hit?" This is probably one of the most common questions people ask when referring to the tragedy of Sept. 11. By juxtaposing illusion and reality in his artwork, Jules de Balincourt poses new questions about such a tragic event in American history: Why did it happen and what now? De Balincourt provides a unique perspective about the trauma that pervaded the United States post-9/11, as well as other contemporary concerns within the country.

The Fine Arts Gallery's exhibition displays some of de Balincourt's most recent and unseen artwork. Many of these newer pieces are representations of an outsider's viewpoint on American social and political issues. Although de Balincourt was born in Paris in 1972, he immigrated to suburban California at an early age, which puts him in a unique position to view American culture from both inside and out.

"The fact that he never fully integrated into any subculture became a seminal influence on his subsequent work as an artist," said Joseph Whitt, curator of the exhibition. "It afforded

him a unique viewpoint from which to explore what he would later describe as America's 'Utopian Dystopia.' Because Americans were deprived of the comfort of national security and their loved ones, post-9/11 was a time of fear and suffering for many people. Until that fateful day, most of the United States had lived in oblivion to the outside world. Some of de Balincourt's artwork focuses on this issue.

"The works in this exhibition are presented in the shadow of one of the most gripping political seasons in our nation's history. In addition to providing a primer for anyone new to de Balincourt's practice, they also posit a chronology of open-ended questioning that indirectly mirrors the progress of American paranoia after 9/11," Whitt said.

In his work, de Balincourt recreates the same quiet horror of that audience who witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers seven years ago. In "Blind Faith and Tunnel Vision," de Balincourt seems to juxtapose dreary destruction with colorful rays bursting out. This could symbolize hope and optimism even in the face of great tragedy.

His exhibit at Vanderbilt will be up until Dec. 5 and is located in the Fine Arts Gallery in the Old Gym. Admission is free. ☘

FASHION

Trend of the week: Jewel tones

ELIZA ROBIE

Staff Writer

So I think it's safe to say that summer is finally over here in Vandyland, and it's high time to start thinking fall fashion. And by fall fashion I mean clothing in rich, vibrant shades that rival the late Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry box.

We saw jewel tones all over the Emmy red carpet: Tina Fey in an eggplant David Meister and Heidi Klum in an elegant red Dior, to name a couple of stars that shone in their jewel-tone dresses. Though waltzing down the red carpet is a far cry from reality for most of us, anyone can try taking a hint from those small screen stars by donning something dazzling. If you need a dress for an upcoming event, break away from the classic LBD and opt for an azure Marc Jacobs cocktail dress from his 2009 Resort collection. The trick here is to wear just one item of lavish color per outfit — no one wants to look plum loco!



For a fun night out, BCBG Max Azria offers an eye-catching silk top in purple for a price that won't deplete your hard-earned summer wages. Pair this shirt with basics and simple black flats and you will look absolutely stunning. Another favorite location of mine is, of course, J.Crew. This perennial favorite is offering blouses in ruffled plum, fuchsia and cerise this fall. If a statement top is a little too intense for you, why not accent a neutral outfit with a striking accessory? Try Banana Republic's oversized croc-embossed clutches in lilac or peacock, paired with a refined nude dress. Or, if you're feeling super funky, trade in those boring tortoise shell wayfarer sunglasses for a pair of bright blue Ray Bans for a look that will really put you in the limelight. Well, I could talk about jewel tones until I'm sapphire blue in the face, but I have the feeling you guys will soon be seeing ruby red. Thank hue for listening and enjoy fall in style. ☘

LETTER FROM
AN ANGRY
WASP

Each week,
our resident
Angry WASP
sounds off on things
that make him buzz.
(see what we did there?)



Dear Lab Classes,

You are the bane of my existence. Everybody thinks it, but it's time somebody said something.

Here's a little correlation for you to understand: I spend three hours a week in my philosophy class, so I get three hours of credit. There's about an hour of reading per class day, which makes it three hours of work.

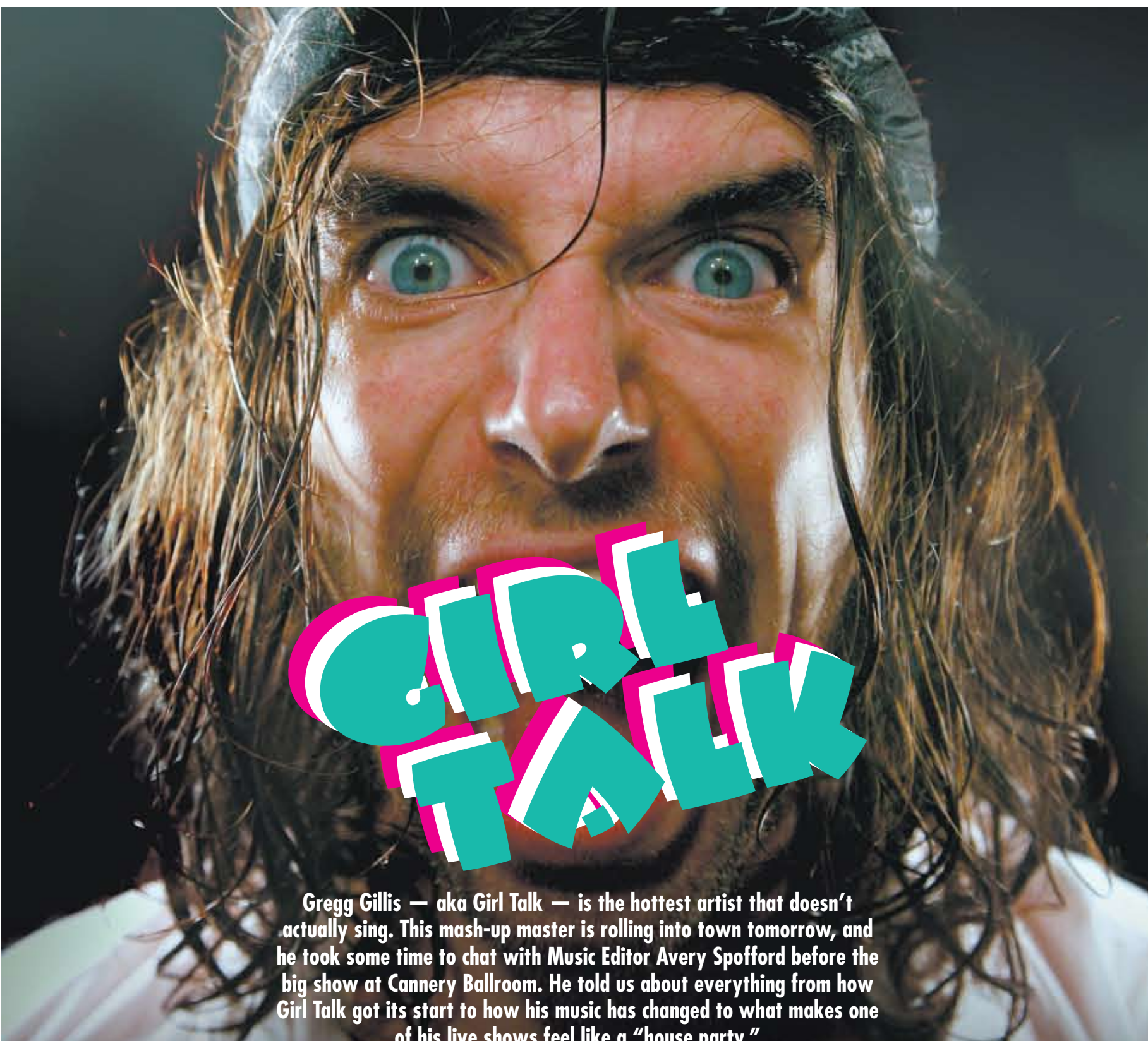
An intro language class has five hours of class a week, with an hour (or less) of work a night. And you get five hours of credit. So, for your measly one hour of credit, why am I stuck in lab for four hours every week, with a five-hour lab report and an hour of prelab prep? And let's not even talk about the pointless tests.

The worst part about all of it is that you, lab classes, are perhaps the most worthless waste of time ever.

Anyone who has worked in a real lab knows that everything you learn in normal lab has no bearing on what actual techniques are. And I'm sure all we pre-meds will be really glad we learned how to calibrate a thermistor while we're operating on someone. "Sorry, ma'am. I wish we could have saved your son, but we couldn't quite reflux his arteries long enough." Yeah, right. Maybe if I can calculate the standard error on your pancreas then I can cure your diabetes, or reconnect that torn ACL by knowing what an angled receiver tube is for.

Thankfully, I only have three weeks of pointless lab left. But for the sake of the young ones, let's reconsider what your purpose is, and maybe give us a little more credit.

Sincerely,
An Angry WASP



Gregg Gillis — aka Girl Talk — is the hottest artist that doesn't actually sing. This mash-up master is rolling into town tomorrow, and he took some time to chat with Music Editor Avery Spofford before the big show at Cannery Ballroom. He told us about everything from how Girl Talk got its start to how his music has changed to what makes one of his live shows feel like a "house party."

VERSUS MAGAZINE: Let's start at the beginning. How did Girl Talk get underway?

GREGG GILLIS: I was in a band in high school with a bunch of my friends, and we were called "The Joysticks Battle the Scan Feed Relay to Your Skull," and we were really just into smashing things and playing weird electronic music. At that point I was diving into the underground of experimental electronic stuff, so when I got into artists like John Osgold, Negative LAN and Kid 606 we started to incorporate sampling into what we were doing, using a lot of skipping CDs and tape collage. When that band ended, I was really into people in the underground who were doing remixes of pop music, and I wanted to start a project that was entirely dedicated to that. Simultaneously, I got my first laptop, for college, so I started the project with that computer.

VM: How did you come up with the name Girl Talk?

GG: I felt that the underground electronic music scene I was associated with when I started was a bit overly serious, a bit stoic. I was playing with other musicians who would play behind electronics or computers and sit there looking at the computer like they were checking their e-mail. And they would have absurd band names like "XR2;4." It just seemed very ridiculous and removed from what I wanted to do. There's a populist idea behind sampling pop music, and I wanted to take it over the top, so I picked the most flamboyant name possible. I wanted to pick a name that other artists would be embarrassed to share a bill with — the absolute sore thumb on the fliers.

VM: Who do you cite as your musical influences?

GG: I'm really down with everyone I sample, and they obviously go on to influence what I do. When I started getting into music I was really down with Public Enemy, NWA, De La Sol, Beastie Boys, a lot of that earlier rap stuff. And then I got into Nirvana, and that blew my mind. I got into Nirvana and Sonic Youth, and that kind of led me into a more experimental world, and that's when I started diving into John Osgold and Kid 606. All of that went on to directly influence the Girl Talk project.

VM: How long does it take you to put together, say, a three minute-30 second song like "Bounce That"? Could you describe the process a little bit as to how you go about putting something like that together?

GG: For the last two albums, I put them together as basically 40- or 50-minute pieces of music. In my mind there are certain division points, but there are no real beginnings or endings to any of those songs, so the track separation and the naming of those songs is just kind of the last thing I do, as an afterthought. I worked on "Night Ripper" and "Feed the Animals" for about two years each, and then dividing up the songs took about two hours. As far as putting the album together in general, it's a big trial and error process. For instance, in "Bounce That" there's a Steve Winwood sample. So I sit down with the song, "Valerie," and take my favorite parts from it. I take that music and then I catalog it. Then, when I'm sitting down to prepare a live show, I'll decide that I want to introduce something uplifting from the '80s, and I'll go through my bank of samples and go to that Steve Winwood sample. Once it exists in the live show, it's constantly changing. Every show I change a small little bit, and it slowly starts to evolve. So then, when I sit down to do an album, I have two years of live shows to pull from, and I can think about what works the best or what I liked the most and edit it down and highlight those pieces.

VM: Your sound has changed pretty drastically since your early releases. How would you characterize that change, and what do you think the reason was for it?

GG: I think I've gotten better with the tools, so I'm now capable

of making many different styles of music out of samples, whereas in the early days I was more or less still figuring things out. I think the biggest change has been the intention behind the project. When I started I was really interested in the juxtaposition of noise and pop, and I really wanted to make avant-garde music out of top 40. I always wanted to push the fun nature of the shows, but I wasn't necessarily making music you could dance to. Then I started to fade into more accessible terrain, working with beats and dropping samples that people could actually recognize. I started playing more house parties, and that was kind of when I saw the light. It was like, "This could be really interesting and crazy, and I think I could make some progressive music that people could also get down and dance to." So I think that whole experience went on to form where the music eventually would go. "Unstoppable" was the first album where I actually started playing around with beats, structures and not completely un-listenable music, and then from there it's faded over the years into more accessible terrain. I just have wanted to make the music more listenable.

VM: I understand that you have yet to run into legal trouble, although your music is composed entirely of samples of other artists' work. How have you escaped being sued or issued a cease and desist when it seems like every artist today is scrambling against music's new modes of distribution?

GG: There is a doctrine in United States copyright law called fair use, and it allows you to sample pre-existing works without asking for permission if your new work falls under a certain criteria. It looks at how transformative your work is, whether it creates competition for the source material's sales, how it impacts the source material and the overall nature of your work — kind of a subjective look at what you're doing. And my label and I both feel that the stuff I'm doing should be able to be released, because we feel that it is transformative. It's making something new out of older music, and it's not in any way negatively impacting the potential sales of the original artist. If anything, it's probably turning people on to their music. So, we stand by that. But, it is a grey area, so we just put the music out with hopes that there won't be an issue. I think it's a sign of the times that we haven't had any problems so far.

VM: Have you heard feedback from any artists regarding your use of their music, complimentary or otherwise?

GG: One of the ladies from Yo Majesty just hit me up on MySpace a couple weeks ago to say that she liked the way I worked with her voice on Feed The Animals. I've had Big Boi from Outkast come out to shows; Sophie B. Hawkins' manager e-mailed me. There have been a handful of random people contacting me to say what's up and that they enjoy the work.

VM: As far as your own sampling goes, do you have a favorite song that you've created or a favorite moment of a song?

GG: On "Night Ripper," one of the last decisions was whether to include the bit with Elton John's "Tiny Dancer" and The Notorious B.I.G.'s "Juicy." I like all of the music to sound good, but I like it when you can tell it's a manipulated sample. I like it to have some level of dissonance, to sound like a collage. The "Juicy" B.I.G. thing sounded so natural to me that I thought maybe people would misinterpret it; I thought it was almost over the top. And I love both of those songs, so I didn't want it to come across the wrong way — I thought people might think of it in terms of irony, just because it fit so beautifully. But I ended up putting it on there, and people really took to it. There's no real single on the album, but that moment kind of evolved into that. That was what people were always requesting and posting on blogs, and to this day I still try to jam that little bit at every show, and

people get really fired up. It's almost like it's become my signature mash-up, which is cool, because I like the way it sounds, and I didn't think that people were going to get down with it the way that they did. I'm psyched that people saw it on the same terms that I saw it.

VM: Let's talk about your live shows, because I know our readers are really excited to see you perform at the Cannery in November. For those readers who have never been to a Girl Talk show, what can they expect?

GG: This tour has been pretty ridiculous so far. Every night has been insane. My shows are presented as a live concert in that there is always a distinct beginning and end and I like to put on a performance. I really just try to break down barriers. I know it's a large room, but I want everyone to forget about the fact that they're in a venue and I want it to feel like a house party. I try to get in the crowd as much as possible, and I try to get people on stage, and I just want to break it down to the point where people lose their minds and forget about where they're at.

VM: Do you have particularities as far as venues you like to perform at? As in, do you prefer an enclosed, traditional venue like the Cannery Ballroom over a festival setting or vice versa? Would you ever play an arena show?

GG: I'm cool with either one. To me they're just kind of different worlds. I used to always want to play the smallest, most intimate venues possible, because it's kind of where I came from. I love the basement show with just 50 people crammed in a small space with all the lights out. I think that can be a wonderful experience, but as I've played more and more shows and festivals I think that I've seen the value of playing the bigger shows. Because occasionally, with a bigger room, the energy can just collectively be through the roof. I think that I just approach different venues a little differently, performance-wise. A lot of the shows on this tour are just insane for me as far as the venue size — in Chicago we're playing to 4,500 people, and the show's sold out, and that is just huge. I love it, and I want it to keep going, and I'm really excited about the potential that one human being playing a computer and doing live remixes of pop music is something that could sell that large of shows. So open up the arena — I'm ready.

VM: Where do you see Girl Talk going from here? Are you working on another album similar to "Night Ripper" or "Feed the Animals," or do you think you'll be trying something new for a while?

GG: When I finished "Night Ripper," I couldn't imagine making another album in that style. I thought it was very exhaustive. But then I slowly started to make more and more music, and two years went by, and I took a step back and I was like, "Whoa, I have enough material for another album in that style. Let's go for it." So with every step of this project I never really look to the future much. I just kind of take it day by day, and I work on the small little pieces of music every day that go on to influence something in a bigger picture. Right now I feel like I can't imagine making another piece of music like "Night Ripper" or "Feed the Animals," but I think it could go down. I am kind of interested in going back to the style of some of my earlier work, basing things around actual song structure. I'm interested in using samples to make individual songs that have repeating parts, choruses, verses and things like that. That's something I've been fooling around with, but at this point I really can't say where it might go.

VM: The ultimate question for the ultimate sampler — who is your favorite artist of all time, and what is your favorite song of all time?

GG: Oh, of all time? I'm going to have to go with the most influential band in my life, and that would be Nirvana.

FLIP SIDE

OVERHEARD

Some people on this campus just don't think before they speak. Sometimes we are lucky enough to overhear what they say.



Compiled from the Facebook group "Overheard at Vanderbilt"



PHOTOS: www.flickr.com

Professor: "Straaange things happen on frat row."

Guy: "I used to get humped all the time by the dogs in Mexico."

Rando: "I was like ... the second whitest person on my soccer team back home."

Guy No. 1: "I think she likes me. I think she'd do me pro bono."

Guy No. 2: "For the public good? She'd do you for the public good?"

Girl: "You don't happen to have an air guitar, do you?"

Girl: "I think I'm too burnt to go tanning."

Girl No. 1: "Oh my god, I love Christmas."

Girl No. 2: "Yeah, Saint Nick is the best."

Girl No. 1: "Who the f*ck is Saint Nick?"

Girl: "With all the things you've been doing, I don't think you should worry about getting herpes from a toilet seat."

(In the middle of a fire alarm)

Girl: "I forgot to put the water in my Easy Mac!"

Rando: "I mean, my social life is so much more stressful than school. ... Do you know how hard tailgating is?"

Girl: "It's not as though I said that she had a horrible, terrible personality. All I said was, 'Your jacket doesn't match your pants.'"

HOROSCOPES



SCORPIO 10/23-11/21:
See Aries.



SAGITTARIUS 11/22-12/21:
Now that The Pub is open for dinner, you can start dating again. Mood-lit booths + late night squirrel meals = romance.



CAPRICORN 12/22-1/19:
Oh, the plight of the water goat. We feel bad for you guys. Have a cookie.



AQUARIUS 1/20-2/18:
"Rectify" doesn't mean what it sounds like, but it's still OK for you to use it and laugh.



PISCES 2/19-3/20:
Just because Halloween is over doesn't mean you have to put those fishnets away, does it? Actually, yes it does.



ARIES 3/21-4/19:
Stop looking at me.



TAURUS 4/20-5/20:
If your election lasts for more than four hours, call a doctor.



GEMINI 5/21-6/21:
Have you ever thought of how creepy the Burger King is? He pops up in random places with that sketchy grin with random food. You don't know where that's been! I got my eye on you, King.



CANCER 6/22-7/22:
Just because you see clouds doesn't mean it will rain. The storm may never come. What a tease.



LEO 7/23-8/22:
You know what makes everything funnier? Alcohol and helium.



VIRGO 8/23-9/22:
Have you ever tried just turning your cell phone off for a day and cutting yourself off from the world? Everyone gets really mad at you.



LIBRA 9/23-10/22:
You should only make the same mistake twice if it was good the first time.

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