

Brain cells involving addiction found

STANFORD, Calif. — The first isolation of the brain molecules involved in drug addiction was reported Thursday by a Stanford Medical Center research team working with mice.
"Eventually this discovery could have enormous importance in dealing with narcotics addiction," said Dr. Avram Goldstein, the team chief.
He said it also might allow development of a nonaddictive pain reliever.

The new isolated substance, extracted from mice brains, is called an opiate receptor. Receptors are special molecules into which drugs fit, like keys into a lock, explained Goldstein, a Stanford pharmacology professor.
"To understand addiction and possibly develop new ways to deal with it, the first thing you have to do is to find the receptors involved," he said.
The key for the Stanford-isolated opiate receptor is morphine,

one of a chemical compound class derived from opium and its relatives.
The heroin taken by an addict is converted by the body into morphine, and morphine acts on nerve cells.
The report was published in the current issue of Science, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The research on mice brain tissue extended over several years and was financed by grants from

the U. S. Public Health Service's National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Drug Abuse Council of Washington, D.C.
"In our work we studied mouse brain fragments and learned how to isolate and partially purify a receptor molecule that combines with a narcotic drug closely related to morphine," Goldstein said.
Asked if similar receptors exist in the human brain, Goldstein said:

"Very similar molecules are almost certainly involved in human narcotic addiction. . . . Many of the effects of heroin and morphine are almost identical in mice, rats and other mammals, including man."
Goldstein said researchers at New York University and Johns Hopkins University had reported observing opiate receptors in human brain membranes obtained at autopsy.

Merrie Melodies and Looney Tunes

By TED BORISKIE

Comedy records are a relatively new medium, gaining widespread popularity in just the last 15 years. Comedians have to have the highest attrition rate among recording artists with very few funnymen garnering enough attention to make it.
Some of the comedians today

manage to stand apart from the norm and build a small following and stay in the limelight as long as they can remain original or fresh.
George Carlin is today's Lenny Bruce. He is not as forlorn as Lenny and he's definitely more crazy but essentially he's doing roughly the same thing.
Cheech and Chong's approach to humor is rougher and less artistic. They basically use the old drunk joke format but update it so that the drunk is a head and his booze is drugs. This way they produce a contemporary sound and manage to sell a lot of records.

The National Lampoon troupe of idiots produce topical, popular and funny records but the members alternate too much to form any kind of unique style.

But the Firesign Theatre (Phil Austin, David Ossman, Philip Proctor and Peter Bergman) come off sounding like champs. They continue to remain the best of the lot, the most original and will probably be the longest remembered.

After almost setting the world on fire with their first four efforts, they released a misunderstood double album and then a definitely weak live recording of one of their stage shows.

"Dear Friends," the double LP, was a collection of short pieces from their Los Angeles radio show. Although the pieces could stand on their own, the collection did not have an overall theme or concept as did the earlier works.

"Not Insane" failed because the takeoff on Shakespeare was painfully missing the visual elements of the show that must have made it the dynamic piece it wasn't on record.

The F. T. decided to split up and go their own ways but nobody went very far. Proctor and Bergman (the bald one and the "straight" one) put out a very good satire on cable television of the future, but it still failed to sell enough to give them any promise of individual careers.

F. T. fans faced a rather bleak future of never hearing their favorite foursome together again. In the two years following the break-up there was almost incessant clamoring for a reunion.

The only thing left to do was to reform and "The Tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra" is the result.

With the new album, the F. T. take upright where they left off three years ago.

"The Giant Rat" is done in the style of an old movie and features Hemlock Stones, the Great Defective. He is assisted by Dr. John Flotsom, O. D.

The F. T. work their way through two sides of non-plot until they come to their regular non-conclusion, a Firesign Theatre trademark. The guys manage to lampoon everything that gets into their way with their rapid fire puns and double and triple meanings.

The F. T. always manages to remain ridiculously loyal to the habits and quirks of their subjects. Holmes still plays the violin ("Flip me the fiddle, Flotsam") and his clipped British accent is constantly put to the test (Down with the Doc and the duck by the dock.).

The F. T. manage to pick out ludicrous points of our lifestyle that we always know are there but are somehow overlooked. As Stones is coming to Chicago to save the city and maybe the world from the clutches of the dreaded "Electrician," he is swamped by reporters, one of whom naturally asks him, "How do you like American girls?"

It's nice to have these guys recording together again.

Thanks to Mike and Mike of Budget Tapes and Records for the album used in this review.

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