

Reviews

Carnaval Knowledge's music act highlight of local Carnaval festival

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

Forget Zephyr and the Dixie Chicken. Anyone who was not at Brazos Landing Friday night missed the supreme party of all time.

The College Station seafood restaurant was the setting for a local celebration of Carnaval, the Brazilian equivalent of Mardi Gras.

The evening featured a performance of Brazilian music by the band Carnaval Knowledge.

Carnaval Knowledge is an eight-piece band of musicians who get together annually to perform at the Austin Carnaval celebration, now in its 10th year of existence. This year marked the band's first performance in College Station. If we're lucky,

they will return every year. The band's members are Susanna Sharpe, vocals; Russ Scanlon, guitar (in photo with Sharpe at right); Horacio Rodriguez, bass; Sergio Santos, percussion; Tom Braxton, saxophone; Steve Schwelling, drums; Larry Croak, percussion; and John Wheat, vocals and percussion.

The music consisted of Brazilian songs that are standard repertoire at Carnaval celebrations in Brazil, where the holiday is celebrated Feb. 3-7, with festivities taking place around the country.

Percussionist Santos described Brazilian music as danceable and having "very fast drumming."

To be certain, the music Friday night was perfect for connoisseurs of percussion. The rhythms of the band's percussionists were the show's driving force and sometimes

the stars of the show, taking the spotlight and the lead.

Some Carnaval songs, Santos explained, feature percussion exclusively. Such songs are called Batucada.

The Batucada performed at Friday night's show made for some of the evening's most enjoyable moments. Members of the band performed the all-percussion numbers on a variety of instruments, including snare drum, tom-toms, cowbell, tambourine and others. The beat increased and decreased in speed; the band often brought the sound down to just one instrument before kicking in again with all drums pounding.

The audience responded with unanimous enthusiasm to these songs and the floor remained

crowded with dancers much of the time.

Marches also are an important part of Brazilian music. Carnaval Knowledge's first number, in fact, would have sounded just perfect in a Main Street parade. The song featured a rapid marching beat by Schwelling and percussionists Santos, Croak and Wheat. Adding to the song were Braxton's jazzy saxophone lines. Lead vocalist Susanna Sharpe, meanwhile, gave a consistently strong performance. Unless you speak Portuguese, you couldn't understand the lyrics, but considering how much fun the music was, it hardly mattered.

Brazilian music is something that seems to have caught on well in College Station. It's danceable, fun, and on weekends it's here, just about the best entertainment in town.



Photo by Ronnie Montgomery

Midler's singing, writing skills provide album with continuity

Bette Midler Atlantic Records

By S. Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

There's nothing washed up about Bette Midler or her vocals on *Beaches*, the original soundtrack to the movie of the same title.

Although this is a typical movie soundtrack with its requisite mixture of old songs, ballads, and duets, it's different because it's enjoyable to listen to even if you never saw the movie.

Midler does all the vocals, creating a continuity not found on most film soundtracks.

Midler's singing talent has as many facets as her entire career as an actress, comedienne and singer. She wrote several of the songs on the album. Vocally, Midler has few limitations, as she demonstrates on *Beaches*. Her voice can be soft and sexy, brassy, or nasal, but her performance is always powerful and on target.

Several of the tracks on the album are old songs that Midler has brought back to life. The first song on the album is "Under the Boardwalk", a classic from 1964. But Midler sings it like it's her own. Her soft, relaxed voice combined with Spanish-styled instrumentals make the listener imagine sweltering heat and cocoa butter even when it's 18 degrees outside.

"I've Still Got My Health" is a song written by Cole Porter in 1940. It's a light, jazzy tune with humorous lyrics like, "Your face is your fortune / so some wise man spoke / My face is my fortune / that's why I'm totally broke!"

"I Think It's Going to Rain Today" was a 1966 hit for singer Judy Collins. It's a ballad reminiscent of Midler's earlier hit, "The Rose."

Other old songs that Midler rescues from the abyss of forgotten



tunes include "The Glory of Love" (1936) and "Baby Mine" (1941). Everyone has probably heard the melody of "The Glory of Love" in advertisements without even realizing it.

"Baby Mine" is a tender lullaby with Midler's gentle voice singing sweet lyrics with a piano as the only instrument.

Of course, there are original songs on the album too. "Wind Beneath My Wings" is a ballad that

demonstrates Midler's control and power. This is going to be one of those songs that will be sung in beauty pageants and weddings. It's a song giving thanks to people who were always there showing their support while someone struggled for success.

"Otto Titsling" is one of the songs Midler helped write. Her humor takes center stage in this cornball song about a crackpot inventor who invents the original bra but history is changed when the conniving Philippe D'Brassiere steals his idea.

The only duet on the album is "I Know You By Heart" with David Pack. It's a typical slow love duet that swells into a crescendo at the chorus. This is the kind of duet found in many movies today. Most of them would work just as well in other movies with other singers. "I Know You By Heart" is a good example of one of those interchangeable duets.

"Oh Industry" is another song Midler wrote. Her voice is almost mechanical in places which complements the harsh, mechanical instrumentals that suggest sounds on a production line. But the lyrics are not about the car or steel industry. They are referring to the industry of showbiz and the love-hate relationship shared by many in the business.

The album ends with a melodramatic piano solo called "The Friendship Theme". It's kind of musical way of saying "The End," and it works.

McMurty's novel 'Lonesome Dove' provides story for excellent movie

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

"Lonesome Dove," a four-part miniseries that aired on CBS this week, is a breathtaking Western epic and arguably the best miniseries ever made. Those who laid aside their textbooks from 8-10 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday nights to see this fine series saw some of the best television entertainment that can be offered.

This adaptation of Larry McMurty's 1986 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel centers on a long and violent cattle drive that goes from the barren south Texas town of Lonesome Dove to the rich, fertile lands of the Montana Territory during an unspecified time in the Old West.

Robert Duvall and Tommy Lee Jones star as Augustus McCrae and Woodrow F. Call, two former Texas Rangers who run the Hat Creek Cattle Company in Lonesome Dove. Despite their close friendship and common belief in frontier justice, McCrae and Call are as different as night and day.

McCrae is a fun-loving type who likes women, gambling and whiskey. Call, however, is the serious-minded type who speaks only when necessary and keeps

his emotions tightly restrained.

Scenes between McCrae and Call bring out these differences and Duvall and Jones give astounding depth to their roles. Both men are outstanding, but it's Duvall as the fun-loving McCrae who commands the screen.

The quiet life the two lawmen-turned-ranchers enjoy is changed with the appearance of their friend, Jake Spoon (Robert Urich), who fills their ears with tales of Montana as a cattleman's paradise. This sets up the coming events as McCrae and Call organize the drive north.

Most of Sunday night's episode is spent introducing the series' major characters in detailed fashion before setting the events of the subsequent episodes in motion.

McMurty's novel used the same approach and the filmmakers are to be commended for adhering closely to the book in bringing the story to the screen.

By the end of Sunday night's episode, the drive is well under way. Joining McCrae and Call on the dusty trail north are Joshua Deets (Danny Glover), an expert tracker; Newt Dobbs (Ricky Schroeder), an orphan youth; and Dish Boggett (D.B. Sweeney), a cowboy lovesick over Lorena Wood (Diane Lane), Lonesome

Dove's only prostitute. All give admirable performances, particularly Lane, who gives the best female performance in a movie's male cast.

Another noteworthy female performance is Anjelica Huston's portrayal of Clara Allen, McCrae's longtime love who lives on a Nebraska horse ranch. Although she appears only in part three of the series, Huston's memorable, presenting her character as a compassionate frontier woman.

In keeping with McMurty's vision of the Old West as a lawless place where the only law is that of the gun and hanging is justice, "Lonesome Dove" contains scenes of violence more graphic than what is generally seen on television.

Call's brutal beating of a U.S. Army scout who tries to take Dish's horse and a young Indian slaying of Deets are two examples. Scenes of shoot-outs and hangings are sprinkled throughout the series.

During the second episode, we also meet a fearsome Indian bandit named Blue Duck (Frederic Forrest). Forrest makes Blue Duck a menacing character the sight of whom can make one shudder.

Experimental theater group's play examines mankind's inhumanity

By S. Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Only in an experimental, avant-garde production such as *In Vitro* can topics ranging from the big bang to the American Civil War to a modern-day abortion clinic all be examined effectively within 90 minutes.

Man's inhumanity to man in his quest for power and wealth is the dominant theme in the Elenco Experimental's debut play *In Vitro*, performed last weekend in Rudder Forum.

The unique portrayal of this not-so-unique theme makes the play a powerful experience.

The cross-cultural cast of the Elenco Experimental did an excellent job of leading the audience through

history as a scientist's experiment in a glass beaker.

The show began in darkness. Flashing lights, energetic music and graceful choreography helped portray the big bang. New Age music by Tangent reflected the actions and feelings in the play at all times.

Although the times in history changed throughout the play, the recurrent themes of cruelty to others, prejudice, greed, and lust remained, proving to the audience and the scientists that the world is on a path of self-destruction.

Author and associate director Matthew L. Hunt wrote a simple but well-constructed plot that deals with individuals and their struggle for a better life, or at least mere survival, in historical periods such as when the Aztecs ruled Mexico, the American Revolution and the present day.

In the scene called "The Clan" the actors simultaneously chant, "The times of peace. The times of simplicity. The times of the clan." The times of peace and simplicity soon change to the times of lust for progress, wealth and power as the migratory clan is introduced to the advantages of permanence in a village.

The persecution of blacks and other minorities is explored in several scenes. In "The Revolution," an argument about freedom and equality for all occurs between two Americans as they take turns whipping a black slave for sport.

Another powerful scene is set in the deep south where a slave is forced to have sex with her mistress in exchange for the privilege of learning to read.

The slave compromises herself so she may teach her children to read and give them a chance at a better life. The irony of the situation is the fact she is taught to read from a Christian primer.

The last half of the play presents five random samples from modern America. In one of these random samples a successful businessman keeps repeating that she only wants what everyone else wants.

She leads a comfortable life but is constantly reminded that her biological clock is ticking. She has nightmares about the abortion she had years ago when other things in life were more important. In the present, however, all she wants is to have a child. She ends up feeling empty.

The final scene is graphic in its portrayal of abuse of sex and drugs. The subjects in the experiment commit suicide because, as they say, "Satisfaction is boring."

The scientists discuss the demise of the subjects in the beaker and compare the results to the beings in other beakers who destroyed themselves in war.



Photo by John Engels

David Roberto, left, and Mark Hadley perform in Elenco Experimental's production of *In Vitro* last weekend.

Around Town

Live Music

Brazos Landing
Brazos Landing is at Northgate. Everyone is admitted. Beer, wine and mixed drinks are served. For more information, call 846-3497.
Thursday — Hootenanny. Acoustic duo featuring Dru Wilson and Had Binion. \$3 cover.
Friday — The Spin. Rock. \$3 cover.
Saturday — Allison Rogers. Acoustic. \$1 cover.
Sunday — Michael E. Johnson and the Killer Bees. Reggae. \$5 cover.
Cow Hop Annex
Next to the restaurant at Northgate. Those 18 and older admitted. Alcohol served to legal drinkers. Call 846-1588 for more information.
Thursday — None of the Above. Rock. \$2 cover.
Friday — The Texas Twisters. Classic rock. \$3 cover.
Saturday — The Killtones. Rock and blues. \$2 cover.
Wednesday — Singalong with Sneaky Pete. \$1 cover.

Frank's Bar and Grill
In College Station at 503 E. University Drive. All ages admitted. Beer, wine and liquor are served to legal drinkers. Call 846-5388 for more information.
Saturday — Don Pope and Friends. Jazz. \$2 cover.

Hall of Fame
In Bryan on FM 2818 north of Villa Maria. Those 18 to 20 admitted on selected dates. Alcohol served to legal drinkers. Call 899-2222 for more information.
Thursday — Lonesome Dove. \$2 cover.
Friday — Johnny Lyon and the Country Nu Notes. \$4 cover.
Saturday — American Sunrise. \$4 cover.

Kay's Cabaret
At Post Oak Mall. Those 18 and older are admitted. Beer, wine and liquor are served to legal drinkers. For more information, call 696-9191.
Thursday — Hank Townsend. Easy listening. No cover.

Friday — The Scroocs. Grateful Dead music. \$1 cover.
Saturday — Subculture. Dance rock. \$2 cover.

Movies

All movies and showtimes are provided by the theaters and are subject to change.
Cinema Three
Located at 315 College Ave. in the Skaggs Shopping Center. Call 693-2796 for more information.
Twins. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:05 p.m.
Night of the Demons. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:20 p.m.
Who's Harry Crumb. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.

Post Oak Three
Located in the Post Oak Mall. Call 693-2796 for more information.
Working Girl. Rated R. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:20 p.m.
The Naked Gun. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7:20 and 9:30.
Her Alibi. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:10 and 9:25.

Schulman Six
In Bryan at 2002 E. 29th Street. Call 775-2643 for more information.
Tequila Sunrise. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:50 p.m.
Big. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.
A Fish Called Wanda. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:25 p.m.
Scrooged. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:05 p.m. and 9:35 p.m.
Child's Play. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 and 9:30. Ends Friday.
Twins. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:20 and 9:30. Opens Friday.

Manor East Three
In Bryan in the Manor East Mall. Call 823-8300 for more information.

Mississippi Burning. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:05 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
The Accidental Tourist. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
Wicked Stepmother. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 and 9:45. Ends Friday.
Dangerous Liaisons. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 and 9:45. Opens Friday.

OPAS concert

Texas A&M will be the host to a concert by the most recorded orchestra in the world. The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields chamber orchestra will perform **tonight at 8 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium**.
The performance is presented by MSC-OPAS.
With a musical repertoire covering 400 years of music by many of the world's most respected composers, the orchestra has recorded more than 400 albums, including all of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's symphonies.
The Academy has been featured on the soundtracks of the films "Africa" and "Miloš Forman's Academy Award-winning biography of Mozart, 'Amadeus'." The soundtrack of "Amadeus" earned the orchestra 13 gold records.

See Orchestra/Page 16

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