Page 12

The Battalion

Reviews Kinison overloads on obscenities, misses humor in tasteless attacks

By Keith Spera

REVIEWER

Certain comedians sometimes reach a level of success where their name recognition is so great, their fame and popularity so widespread, that they apparently believe that anything they do will be funny, even

when it isn't. Sam Kinison has reached that point

He is one of the country's bestknown comics. If any English-speaking person does not immediately recognize his name, then they almost certainly will correctly identify a pic-ture of the portly, long-haired come-dian, or at least know his comedic themselves, "Man, this comedy guy rocks," and then go buy the album.

What a surprise when they play it at home and Mom bans it faster than the latest Slayer release. For indeed, unlike the video would suggest, this is not an album of fun rockin' comedy - in fact, there's very little comedy of any sort.

Kinison has fallen into a trap that has snagged more than a few comedians before him — make the material obscene, make it outra-geous, curse your brains out, and it automatically will be funny.

At this point, the gimmick of Kinison's yell has worn off, and it no longer can carry its comedic weight. The jokes should have grown stronger to pick up where the yell

Brilliant? No. Different? Maybe. Completely tasteless and downright offensive? Definitely. Kinison seems to enjoy basking in the dank light of his tasteless-guy reputation.

trademark — that gut-wrenching left off. bellow of a yell.

His fame shows no signs of abating. Kinison's open-mouthed mug recently graced the cover of Rolling Stone and the video of his remake of "Wild Thing," which stars Jessica Hahn, her recently enlarged breasts, and a dozen or so of Kinison's heavymetal cronies, has endeared him to legions of the MTV faithful. All this hype and publicity have catapulted sales of Kinison's latest

'comedy" album, Have You Seen Me Lately?, to the half-million mark.

I suspect that many of these pur-chasers had no idea what they were getting. A kid sees Kinison's video on the same MTV countdown as his favorite rock 'n' rollers. In the video, Kinison frolicks with a sexy, largebreasted lady — a cool, rock 'n' roll thing to do — while members of the reigning hard-rock elite egg him on. The tune itself contains some

rude guitar, some aggressive drum-ming, a bit of background-vocal shouting, and some Kinison-esque bitch-hating lyrics. The kids say to

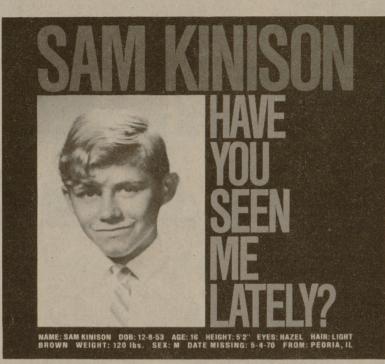
Instead, they only have gotten more outrageous, and I don't mean that in a complimentary fashion. Kinison's old routine about how his wife wouldn't let him take his "thing" along when going out with the boys, even though "they're all bringing theirs," while not for everyone, was still kind of clever, and not

beyond the realm of good taste. Now, however, we get to hear about sneaking into a church and having sex on the altar. We also are treated to a "brilliant f---ing segueway," as Kinison puts it, from a dis-cussion of the Garden of Eden to a

chat about anal sex. Brilliant? No. Different? Maybe Completely tasteless and downright offensive? Definitely

Granted, comedy can take some liberties with language and subject matter. As Kinison has said, his jokes don't have to be accurate, because "they're not prescriptions, they're jokes

Sometimes the occasional verbal obscenity can be amusing. But Kini-



son seems to enjoy basking in the

story about homosexual necrophilia. Later he tries to justify all the dis-gusting stuff with the offhand remark "It's my job." That's strange -I thought his job was to be funny.

If that is his job, he didn't even accomplish it at the concert he recorded for the album. The audience does not really laugh all that much. They respond to Kinison's baiting

remarks with predictable shouts and when Kinison suggests Jim Bakker could produce a good, long sus-should take his own life. They tained bout of laughter. A dorm scream "NO!!" when ol' Sam asks room full of drunk guys might find 'Do we like to wear rubbers, guys?'

The crowd's reaction, and Kinison's predictable remarks, brings to the album Have You Seen Me Lamind Morton Downey's talk show tely? is best left unseen and defishoutfest.

He, too, has a crowd of young He uses the phrase "Just when you thought it couldn't get any sicker . . ." as an introduction to a story about homosexual percentility white conservative kids who think gious fanatics, safe-sex — and the crowd will love you. For Mort, this is OK. After all, he is not a comedian by trade. Sam Kinison is a comedian; he should do better.

Kinison does manage some funny lines. His discussion of the "Robo-Pope" is kind of humorous. His contention that Rock Against Drugs makes no sense is sort of clever.

Nowhere on this album, though, cheers. They roar an affirmative is there a string of material that this album's brazen, macho swagger mildly amusing, but other than that, nitely unheard.

Aggie Cinema preview: two French stories of anguish make excellent entertainment

"Jean de Florette" "Manon of the Spring" Starring Yves Montand Directed by Claude Berri

By Suzanne Hoechstetter and Shane Hall

The story begins with "Jean de Florette," the simpler of the two tales, set sometime around World War I. We are introduced to Cesar Papet Souybeyran (Yves Montand), an aging farmer in the French countryside, and his nephew Ugolin

tor from the city who brings his wife out of himself by shouting his love and little girl, Manon, to the coun-try, where they plan to farm and raise rabbits for the rest of their chest. lives

The only thing Jean knows about fection because she knows he is in farming and breeding rabbits is what part responsible for her father's

for her. He becomes obsessed and sews one of her hair ribbons to his

She is repulsed by his show of afpart responsible for her father's

Author provides guide detailing movie making for aspiring film-makers

Subsequent chapters cover top-ics such as necessary film making

equipment, making your film

look more professional, budge

ing and raising the money to fi-nance your first feature.

In another chapter, director Sam Raimi ("The Evil Dead," "E-

vil Dead II") shares his experi-

ence of borrowing from doctors

dentists and "anyone who might

working on television commeri

cals. Directors Adrian Lyne ("Fa

got their start making commen

If there is any weakness to the

book, it is the amount of attention Russo gives to horror film makers

compared to those in other

genres. Granted, the rise in inde-

pendent film making has been es-

pecially beneficial to the world of

horror, but some noted indepen-dents are given little more than casual mention.

John Sayles ("Matewan," "Eight Men Out") and the late

John Cassavetes are two exam-ples. This complaint, however, is minor, considering that in looking at horror, the book fea-

tures some of the cream of the

crop of horror film makers (Romero, Raimi, Tobe Hooper). The book's appendix features

some sample contracts for music

and partnerships, among others. "Making Movies" is highly rec-

commended for anyone with a

love of movies and above all.

those who yearn to try making

them. In fact, upon completion of the book, don't be surprised if

you find yourself chomping at

the bit to try your hand at film

Dead.

try.

Dead.

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

The 1980s have been the greatest decade since the '60s for independent film makers. The rise in Hollywood production costs and the VCR revolution are just two factors contributing to the increase in movies made by film makers working outside of the Hollywood system.

The independent producers have become home for some of the most daring, creative work in movies today. Newsweek once proclaimed, "The day of the American independent movie is at hand.

John Russo, who wrote and co-produced the 1968 horror classic, 'Night of the Living Dead," has written a definitive work on the fascinating world of independent film making in his book, "Making Movies," published by Dell Publishing

"Making Movies" is a complete how-to guide to independent movie production and covers virtually every subject from how to finance and distribute films to

views with people working in va-rious divisions of the film industry who have gained measurable success as independents. Russo's interview subjects range from directors of cult classics (Tobe Hooper, George Romero) to Aca-demy Award winners (Dick Smith, Oliver Stone).

Russo writes in an optimistic and personal style, often using second-person form, he addresses the reader one-on-one.

His basic message to aspiring film makers is that they can find success if they have the drive. "Sometimes getting there can seem like an impossible dream. But I want to put some flesh on your dream. I want to clothe it in reality," Russo writes in the book's introduction.

After reading the entire book, Russo comes across as sincere rather than as someone making a cheap sales pitch. The combination of Russo's own writing and the anecdotes from others makes for fascinating, entertaining reading, whether you are an aspiring movie maker or a die-hard movie buff.

Russo begins the book with the story of how he and George Romero, after years of sleeping on floors and doing films of weddings and babies, finally succeeded with "Night of the Living Dead," still one of the most sucRE



By Cray Pixl ENTERTAINN

The Aggie Henrik Ibsen he action fro ve Norway t the America Cruel, ma rip off the l ke honey on Emma Rea lays Hedda m belle fence onment. Th harming exte

have a few extra dollars" to fi-nance his first film, "The Evil Reading's I Lizzie Borden, another inde ed woman c pendent film maker, talks as well ess and hope about raising money outside of nd mother. Hollywood to make her film, "Working Girls," a critically ac-claimed look at life in a brothel. Hedda's liv rough othe ntrol over th Many film makers start out Her desire

iny ultimately irer, Elliot tal Attraction") and Michael Ci-mino ("The Deer Hunter") are erself. As Hedda, two examples of film makers who performance the characte cials. "Making Movies" includes She is at h an informative discussion of working in the commercial indusshoving a pin Mrs. Elvsted, when firing In part three, "Cast, Crew and

Her life rightened b arks to vi hom she con Hedda Gab nt emotions ork manusc ith fury and orm of feelir By her re ears as a priz all men. However, s.

as no power ne and mere Hedda's bo aled by he thin scene of nries' imped

The attenti hries' set ful Fan

TRIMBLE, ve a curator irectors. But useum of Ye ish and reput in country cha Eugenia and nverted an ory of memor ntiques, most rom friends,

To a persor eum could be

lane, past ice b

cook stoves, h

gadgets and fa

back memorie

when we grev

From anot

useum is the

Wa

Waco is neg

of the most

Former b

ker Gaines

unpaid cu

the West.

osh savs.

parding.

"Having it a

Co-Conspirators," * Russo discusses working with those who work in front of and behind the what kind of equipment to buy. The book also contains intercamera. This section includes anecdotes and tips from makeup artist Dick Smith, who won an Academy Award for his work on "Amadeus," and animator/special effects artist Rick Catizone, who worked on "Creepshow," "Evil Dead II" and "Night of the Living

REVIEWERS

If you find yourself craving a cultural experience go see truly 'Jean de Florette" and "Manon of the Spring" Tuesday night in Rudder Theater. The two-part award-winning French saga will be shown back-to-back as part of the Aggie Cinema International Film Series.

Both films are in French with English subtitles, so the beauty of the language and expression is not lost in dubbing

The films, directed by Claude can use the spring. Berri, were nominated for eight French equivalents of the Academy Awards and won four British film awards (the equivalent of the Oscars) in 1987.

After viewing them it is apparent why critics all over the world have been praising this bittersweet saga of love, anguish and revenge.

Souybeyran. Ugolin decides to plant carnations but knows that he will need more water for irrigation. The Souybeyran property is next to Marius Camoins' farm, which has a spring that Ugolin could use for irrigation. So the scene is set for a nice little European version of what Texans call a

range war. When Marius refuses to sell even an inch of his property to the Souy-beyrans, they send him to his maker a little earlier than he had planned and decide to buy the land so they

But dead land owners seem to always have relatives to claim their rightful inheritance.

Jean Cadoret is the relative who appears on the scene to claim his grandfather's land. His mother was Florette, which explains the film's ti-

Jean, a hunchback, is a tax collec-

he has read in books. He knows there is a spring on his land but he cannot find it because the Souybeyrans plugged it up with cement.

As the movie continues, we see Jean and his family struggling to get enough water to keep their farm, and hopes, alive. Jean runs himself and his mule ragged in the process, but retains his optimism and ideals, refusing to give up. Sadly, his struggle is to no avail.

The story continues in the second part of this saga, "Manon of the Spring." In this finely-crafted sequel, we see Manon as a young woman living on the property, raising goats. During "Manon of the Spring,"

we see the story slowly unravel much in the form of the ancient Greek tragedies of Sophocles, such as "Oedipus Rex" and "Antigone.

Ugolin sees Manon one day while walking in the hills and inhe is stantly falls in love. He makes a fool \$2.50 with a student I.D.

for the injustice when she discovers the underground source of the spring. She seizes her opportunity for revenge by blocking the flow to Ugolin's carnations and the rest of the village.

Since nobody can get water, the crops are damaged and Manon completes her revenge by exposing the Souybeyrans' deceptive acts

The end makes seeing both parts of this saga well worthwhile, but we won't ruin the experience for you by giving it all away. This is something you just have to experience to believe

It is a story of anguish and sorrow. Some cruel twists of fate give the tear-jerker saga a surprise ending.

Jean de Florette" and "Manon of the Spring" will be shown Tuesday p.m. Both films can be seen for

Band's debut LP full of political commentary

The Toll **Price of Progression Geffen Records**

By S. Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Raucous and political are the first two words that come to mind when trying to describe The Toll's new album Price of Progression. This rockn-roll quartet combines wild, passionate music with harsh political commentaries.

Lead vocalist Brad Circone has a loud, coarse voice that he takes to extremes. He shouts or whispers to emphasize some political or social statement.

In "Jonathan Toledo," a severe criticism of the suffering and persecution Native Americans have had to mother and wife. endure, Circone shouts, "The reser-Circone asks, vation, oh it still survives/Do not close your eyes!" Then he gives a long Indian whoop. "Take my hand across this land, to some promised sand," he sings

At the end of the song he shouts again, "This is the culture of sham-This is the culture of hypocrisy!/ This is the culture of shame!" He is talking about the white man not Indians.

Except for lyrical content, most of the songs are the same. The Toll are not particularly diverse. They write all of their songs, so maybe they just write what they know they do best.

they follow in most of the songs. The songs start out loud and wild, usually featuring guitarist Rick Silk and drummer Brett Mayo. Greg Bartram joins in later on bass.

The songs all follow the same for- tation. mat. Circone makes a political comment before he actually begins to a lot better if the band would vary is sing. The music slows down later in sound a little bit. But it does not the song. Circone shouts something seem that The Toll has sacrificed in else followed by a short instrumen- tegrity for the sake of progress.

tal. It ends suddenly and loudly. It not necessarily a bad style; it's just

makes deep philosophica statements and after each one Cir cone whispers, "Smoke another ciga " It is a sublime comment of rette. how the world deals with problem by creating more problems.

'Word of Honor" is about how undignified it is to lose sight of integrity for the sake of success.

Anna-41-Box" and "Living in the Valley of Pain" are two songs about the sorrow and anguish in life "Anna-41-Box" is about an ordinary woman who has no more life left i her because she has given everythin to her selfish husband and children She merely goes through the mo tions of housework and being a

Circone asks, "Anna, won't you break you servile chains?... Anna,! know you're in there.

'Living in the Valley of Pain" pit art and intellectualism against reli gion. Circone gives a lengthy nama tive about a young boy named Jameson Rain who denies the church early in life because all he

sees in it is fear and hypocrisy. The song graphically tells of the pain he goes through in his fight within himself and against his parents and the church.

'I haven't done anything wrong! he shouts. "Why can't you let m carve my own creative niche?" He even goes as far as to say, "Catholi They have a definite style that cism imposes guilt and it leaves me ev follow in most of the songs. The with insanity and rage!" It is a brut and bitter song.

The Price of Progression is highly political, and most of the songs and thought-provoking in their presen-

The album is good, but it could be

Ranger Ha seum, is gla be kept inta "I knew de G Dallas Mori About 75 of the 3.2 guns and the city-ow are part of ov de Graf Tommy and Most of

the museun knife and onry — ha people who fenried's go his ability as "I never

wanted that get a hold said, pointin display. "I s years befor said

"He's th ever had, a him anythi Manager D gotiating t guns. "He's ections dow

Singer gives insight into making her debut album

Tanita Tikaram Ancient Heart Reprise Records

By S. Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Few people know exactly what they want to do with their lives. Even fewer know what they want and how to do it by the time they are 19.

But 19-year-old Tanita Tikaram has her act together. She knows what she does best and has proves it on her debut album, Ancient Heart.

This young musician fuses an interesting combination of folk and jazz to create a style all her own. On a promotional tape for her new album, Tikaram discusses people who have influenced her work and her phi-

losophy about songwriting. Otis Redding, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles were some of her favorite artists, Tikaram says. "They had a knack for choosing great songs," she says

"I discovered Otis Redding in

my father's record collection and my mother hated him because he has such a rough voice," she says. 'She was very much a Sam Cooke fan and I like Sam Cooke, but Otis Redding has just so much . .I was terribly impressed. soul

Even as a kid you know when somebody's got it.

Tikaram seems to have it, too. She has a deep sensuous voice and knows how to make the best of it by letting it seemingly float without effort over mostly guitar and piano instrumentals.

Valentine Heart" clearly shows how the album is made because the song is orchestrated around what she plays on the guitar, she says.

"When I write a song I never think about where it's going to end up," she says. "But when you live with a song for a bit you ob-viously want to do something with it and I find that if you have to add instruments, it can take away sometimes if you're not handling it properly," Tikaram says in her clipped British accent. She seems sure of what she is

doing and aware of the power in

her art. Although her songs focus on gathering hope and strength, most of the lyrics are somewhat ambiguous, but they contribute to

next song is coming from," Tikaram says. "It's always a surprise to me, because I never understand a song until about two months after I've written it, which is a very perverse thing.

songs should mean anything to anybody else," she says. "It's a very peculiar thing but the fact that they do is still a mystery to me

melancholic, but Tikaram ex-plains that she got the idea for the song when she was studying poetry

A poem raised the question of leaving an ordinary sober life for one of chaos. Just knowing you can leave allows you to stay in the ordinary life, Tikaram says.

The chorus paints a picture of a life so ordinary that the person living it is almost nonexistent with lyrics like, "Look, my eyes are just

holograms, look your love has drawn red from my hands/From my hands you know you'll never be more than twists in my sobrie-

Many of her songs come from personal experiences or people she has encountered. "Some of the songs obviously come from personal experiences," she says. "There's always a part of you in a

Perhaps that was her message in "Good Tradition," a peppy tune that seems to embody some of Tikaram's philosophy. She not maintain a certain level of integrity to give each song her best ef-

was that they were very keen to

demand the best from herself, she may become a good musical tradition in her own right

the mysterious effect she seeks. "You never know where your

"There's no reason why my

The song "Twist in Sobriety" is

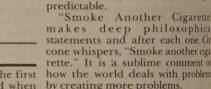
only includes part of herself in her work, but she also tries to

fort. "The thing about the Beatles do the best for each song," she says. "They had no overall view on anything. They were just keen

to bring out the best in each individual song. If Tanita Tikaram continues to

cessful independent films ever making

Manon finds her way to fight back



of WACO (