

Reviews

With 'Cross That Line,' Howard Jones may achieve the popularity he deserves

Howard Jones
Cross That Line
Elektra/Asylum Records

By Suzanne Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

When Howard Jones made his mark on the pop charts several years ago with songs like "Don't Try to Live Your Life in One Day," most of his songs were upbeat, feel-good songs dealing with important issues, but he did not achieve the super-popularity that someone of his talent deserves.

He has not released any work in the past two or three years but from the sound of his new album, *Cross That Line*, HoJo fans should agree his absence was well worth the wait.

Jones demonstrates his versatility as an artist on this album for which he produced, composed and arranged all but two songs. His rich, unique-sounding voice can be heard on all the songs except "Out of Thin Air," a gentle piano solo played by Jones.

"Out of Thin Air" is the first track on side two and it sets the mood for the rest of the album.

On *Cross That Line*, Jones seems obsessed with love and its many different stages and levels, whether it is infatuation, too much love, destructive love, or breaking up.

"Fresh Air Waltz" is about supporting and loving someone who is tired or depressed. Jones sings, "Now it's our turn to give you some help/ Fresh air that's just what you need."

His songs deal with the extreme emotions love involves, including pain in "Last Supper," when Jones sings "Is it a crime to live this lie? Letting go is so hard," to the safety he sings about in "Fresh Air Waltz" and "Powerhouse."

Jones did the horn arrangement for "Wanders to You," a song about the illusions created by a man in love.

The lyrics of "Wanders to You" contrast themselves as he realizes the tricks his mind has been playing on him when he describes a girl. "There you are with your golden brown skin/ The sparkling pacifico catching

your chin/ The salt on your margarita will stick to your lips."

Later in the song he sees the girl as she really is. "There you are with your London grey skin/ The light from the streetlamp corrupting your chin/ The cream from a guinness lingers on your lips," he sings.

In "The Prisoner," Jones plays keyboards with Ian Stanley as he sings about being a prisoner of love and how he has no control or confidence without his lover.

"Everlasting Love," the first single from *Cross That Line* is the only song on the album that sounds like his older work. It is a song that reflects the trend toward conservatism in America. This is reflected in lyrics like, "He wasn't looking for a notch on his bedpost/ A love to push, pull and burst at the seams/ I need an everlasting love/ I need a friend and a lover divine."

"Powerhouse" is an energetic song about the power love has to change people for the better. One of the best lines in the song is when Jones sings, "You must have been through college, got a lovin' degree/ You ripped away my mental chains and

set this poor boy free."

"Last Supper" is about love that has to break up because, as Jones sings, "We have created a suffering circle that threatens to tighten and destroy you and me." It is a sad song about two people who love each other but are just not right for each other.

Another song about breaking up is the title track, "Cross That Line," for which Jones played guitar and did the brass arrangement with Kick Horns.

"Guardians of the Breath" is one of the few songs on the album that does not discuss love. It is about the destruction of the world as forests are chopped down and acid rain poisons the earth. Howard Jones rarely records anything that deals in trivialities.

Cross That Line explores just about every aspect of love while revealing Jones' wide range of talents. Maybe this album will allow the public to give him the credit he deserves and let him cross that invisible, ambivalent line to fame and fortune.

New album from XTC pays homage to 1960s but keeps modern sound

XTC
Oranges and Lemons
Rough Records
****½

By Suzanne Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Listening to *Oranges and Lemons* by XTC may not provide you with the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C, but it will give your musical diet plenty of variety. Alternative music listeners will enjoy XTC's new album.

Much of XTC's music and message is reminiscent of bands from the 1960s. The combination of folk and electric guitar, bongos, maracas and tamborines help create the sounds of the '60s.

The band manages to vary its music and style enough to keep the listener interested. XTC is not merely a band trying to relive the music of the '60s. In many of the songs, XTC members Colin Moulding, Dave Gregory and Andy Partridge update the sound and the lyrics to be relevant to the 80s.

Moulding and Partridge wrote all of the songs, but they are all different enough so the album does not sound like one long track with different lyrics to distinguish one song from another, as many other band's albums do.

It is possible to listen to *Oranges and Lemons* several times and notice something different each time.

The album begins with a mysterious Middle Eastern sound in "Garden of Earthly Delights," a song about a fantasy place where anything can happen.

XTC continues to cover just about every topic imaginable: competition, stress, homosexuality, love, war and insecurity.

"The Mayor of Simpleton" is a light, simple tune that is a lot like Sam Cooke's "What a Wonderful World" with its tale of a guy who knows little about math or logic but who knows he loves his girl.

"Hold Me My Daddy" contains a message about the utility and pain of war and how it destroys people's lives, a prevalent theme

of the '60s.

Another song criticizing war is "Here Comes President Kill Again," which condemns the power of world leaders and how they use it to initiate wars.

The lyrics include the lines "Here comes President Kill again/ from pure white house to number 10/ Taking lives with a smoking pen/ President Kill wants killing again."

The music and vocals in "Poor Skeleton Steps Out" sound a lot like how people are unhappy with themselves as long as they keep skeletons in the closet and refuse to show their true selves to the world. This view reflects the '60s attitude of "let it all hang out."

The first stanza makes this point in a different way: "One of these days you can cast aside your human/ Be free."

"The Loving" has timeless lyrics that could have been heard at a '60s love-in or in an announcement for a second Harmonic Convergence. This is proven by the lyrics "The loving's coming/ The loving's more than just an ad man's vision/ The loving's strumming on your heart strings, so loud that you can't help but listen."

Insecurity is the topic addressed in "One of the Millions." The lyrics say, "I got so much to say but I'm afraid it'll come out wrong. . . But I won't rock the boat, cause I'm scared what might happen/ I won't rock the boat."

"Merely a Man" is a fairly contemporary sounding song. It is one of the best songs on the album, but all of the tracks are so different from one another that it is hard to pick a favorite.

Comparing *Oranges and Lemons* with other bands or albums would be like comparing oranges with apples.

XTC is unique and enjoyable to listen to, but probably never will be considered mainstream because they are different enough to be rejected by Top-40 listeners. This is exactly why *Oranges and Lemons* is refreshing.

A special thanks to Music Express for loaning this album for review.

Chinese film breathtaking, yet depressing

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

When we think of foreign films, we often tend to think of the artsy European productions. This week, however, MSC Aggie Cinema's International series presents a film from the Orient.

The Chinese film, "Girl From Hunan," will be shown Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in Rudder Theater. Admission is \$2.50.

Dialogue is in Chinese with English subtitles.

"Girl From Hunan" is a tragedy set in the Yang clan, a secluded, self-governing clan in China. The story centers on Xiaoxiao, a teenage girl given in marriage to Chunguan, a boy 10 years her junior.

Understandably, her marriage to Chunguan does not seem much like a marriage at all, but rather more like a long babysitting job. She has to look after him while she does her farming chores and tote him on her back when the two go to town.

Because Xiaoxiao is a virgin, and destined to remain so until her husband matures, Huagou, a nearby farmer who is actually her brother-in-law, lustily pursues her. The two have a short affair. When Xiaoxiao tucks Chunguan into bed, she cheerfully takes off to the fields for a rendezvous with Huagou.

Unfortunately, Xiaoxiao gets pregnant — and the Yang clan has a highly unfavorable view of adultery. We see the prescribed punishment in one scene in which the clan's elders punish an adulterous couple. The man's legs are broken and the woman is drowned.

Throughout "Girl From Hunan," Xiaoxiao is presented in a sympathetic light. Given in marriage to a 6-year-old boy, she is placed in a position of not being able to grow fully into womanhood. It seems quite clear that Xiaoxiao is trapped.

The film features superb cinematography. The breathtaking panning shots of the mist-covered mountains and wide-open rice fields are well worth the price of admission. The story itself is moving, but sometimes depressing.

Family-style meals, desserts, formal dinners in style again

NEW YORK (AP) — Foods served family-style, "lumpy, homey food," and more desserts are among Clark Wolf's predictions for food and entertaining trends in the 1990s.

Wolf, a New York City-based restaurant consultant, says home entertaining is becoming more popular, where guests are seated at tables and served home-style foods from platters.

"The old American custom of setting food out in the center of the table, with each person serving himself, is making a strong comeback," Wolf says.

"It's the one time we actually cook, and the only occasion not to use the microwave."

Desserts are also popular, Wolf says. It's a trend toward increased health awareness on the one hand, and calorie-laden desserts on the other.

"First you eat the grilled fish, then

you eat chocolate cake," Wolf says.

Why the move toward more desserts?

"People need some sort of a treat after a bout with the Lifecycle," he explains. "I think we'll see much more of this 'physio-schizo' behavior, as premium adult desserts, incorporating everything from creme fraiche to imported bittersweet chocolate, continue to flood the market."

Wolf is the newest member of Champagne Perrier-Jouet's Great Entertainers Council, a group of designers and authors skilled in design and entertaining.

The second annual Great Entertainers Council luncheon was held here recently. The luncheon featured table settings by council members Mary McFadden and Martha Stewart. Renny Reynolds and Lee Bailey are also members of the group.

Wolf also sees a move back to more "old-fashioned rites of pas-

sage." He says debutante balls, country club dances and traditional weddings that have become increasingly commonplace in the last decade will become even more of a fixture of entertaining in the next 10 years.

"The dinner at the club, summers in Maine, cardigan-and-corduroy lifestyle personified by President Bush has increased the appeal of these old-fashioned celebrations," he says.

And, Wolf says, no matter how strong the return to "warm and friendly" cooking, there will also be a place for food that promises excitement and exotica, a trend toward what he calls "backyard Caribbean."

"Americans enjoy taming exotic cuisines by serving them in familiar environments," notes Wolf. "Caribbean cuisine, with its emphasis on beans, rice, fish, chilies and cumin, may become one of the summer entertaining ideas just as Mexican was several years ago."

Sensationalist reporting earns Geraldo awards, fans, ratings

NEW YORK (AP) — We come to you today from the stage at Times Square Studios in Manhattan, where we'll be bringing you one of the most provocative pop culture phenomena of our time.

Geraldo Rivera has been called the "P.T. Barnum of talk show hosts" and "the Peck's Bad Boy of television news."

"People" magazine called him "insufferable." The Washington Post denounced his last special as "television." Los Angeles Times critic Howard Rosenberg says he doesn't believe a thing he sees Rivera do.

Tell us briefly, Rivera, in your own words: What is it about you that so affronts so many in your profession?

"I think envy and jealousy plays a part," he said. "There's a feeling that I somehow gypped my way to the top. I've gone too far, gotten too big. I've defied all their notions. I should've failed a dozen times by now."

He should have failed, but in the

19 years since his television debut, he has earned more than 150 prizes, including three Emmys and a Peabody, and his popularity with viewers has never flagged.

Suzanne Falter-Barns, a freelance writer in the audience during a recent studio taping of his syndicated daily talk show, "Geraldo," said, "The thing about Geraldo is he's passionate about what he does."

"There's no passion on TV anymore. Everything is canned, processed, fake entertainment. Geraldo's show is kind of fascinatingly morbid."

Not so, says critic Tom Shales of The Washington Post.

"He's an emotional cheerleader who tries to sway audiences in a very facile and sleazy way," Shales said. "I call him 'The Great Panderer' because he keeps searching for cheaper, more sordid, more sensational topics. At best he is embarrassing."

Despite the reviews, the Investigative News Group he formed in 1986

with his wife, brother and one employee has grown to 30 people. With Tribune Entertainment, it produces his live specials and his talk show. The fastest-growing program in syndication, "Geraldo" jumped 67 percent in the national Nielsen ratings over the past year, capitalizing on an age-old fascination with criminals, deviants and misfits.

Rivera also is developing a weekly series, "The Investigators," and has just announced plans to buy up TV stations with five other prominent Hispanics.

Yet he remains the punch line to an industry joke: Heard about the Geraldo Rivera Home Game? A life-size cardboard cutout of Geraldo and a folding chair.

Rivera's law degree has proven invaluable. Much of his career has been spent defending himself against charges of distorting the news; of using drugs; of denying his heritage by calling himself "Jerry Rivers" or, conversely, of changing his name to Geraldo Rivera to cash

in on ethnic hiring trends.

He pleads innocent to all counts. "I'm the most scrutinized person on national TV," he said. "Everything I say, everything I do is X-rayed nine ways to Sunday."

He's convinced the fuss concerns style, not substance, and that one day, "some biographer — probably someone not yet born — will show me as a person who brought innovation to television."

The Rivera style — explosive, confrontational, the antithesis of the detached professional — mirrors his off-camera personality. Long after the guests have gone home, Geraldo is still "Geraldo," a Hispanic Dudley Do-Right, a real-life Equalizer.

Marty Berman, executive producer of "Geraldo," said, "It was always there — the self-assuredness, the cockiness." The two met at New York's WABC-TV, which persuaded Geraldo to trade poverty law for the "Eyewitness News."

Berman became his film editor in 1970. "Nobody else wanted to work with him," Berman said.

"Not only was he arrogant, Berman says, "he was fearless. He'd walk into a shooting gallery in the Bronx like you'd walk into a coffee shop. He's still very difficult, very demanding. But now he's running a grown-up organization."

C.C. Dyer, a "Geraldo" producer, is his fourth wife — "fourth and final," Rivera says.

Rivera is Puerto Rican and half Jewish, one of five children of Lilly Friedman and Cruz Rivera, cafeteria workers who married over her parents' objections. He speaks fondly of his mother, who lives in a house he bought her in Florida, and reverentially of his father, who died in 1987.

He grew up in a blue-collar section of Long Island, "a social politician." His compulsion to prove himself is rooted in childhood: "When I fought, I was proving myself to the street kids," he says. "When I did well in school, I was proving myself to the smart kids."

He's now a proud father himself, of a 9-year-old son by his third marriage. Gabriel Rivera lives in California with his mother. He and Rivera

spend every other weekend and all summer together.

Rivera hopes to have another child. He and C.C. live in Manhattan but are house-hunting upstate. They started after a pregnant doctor was murdered at Bellevue Hospital.

Of course, the "Geraldo" show, with its lineup of neo-Nazis, hookers, and adolescent murderers, isn't exactly a romp in the park.

Alexander Johnson, a thoughtful young producer who's screening hours of kiddie porn for an upcoming show, said of the show, "Geraldo" is good people, but I don't know how long I'll be able to do this."

He makes no apology for crying on camera, a habit dating back to his early days at WABC where, less than two years into the job there, he tackled the biggest story of his life.

It began with a call from Dr. Michael Wilkins, who had just been fired by Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, then the nation's largest institution for the mentally retarded.

"He had a key," Rivera said. "He knew what time the guards changed, when I could get inside. I asked what I would find. He said, 'Children being abused.'"

That night, Wilkins accompanied Rivera and a cameraman to Willowbrook, where they filmed five minutes inside one of the 30-odd buildings. Then the cameraman went outside and threw up.

"Geraldo said, 'I am not going to give this up. I am going to come back and come back and come back until this is cleaned up.'" Wilkins recalls.

Fifteen years and countless stories later, Willowbrook closed. Rivera's reporting on Willowbrook won him the George Foster Peabody Award and catapulted him to the ABC network. He joined the entertainment division, then the staff of "20/20."

In 1985, Roone Arledge pulled a "20/20" segment on Marilyn Monroe's relationship with the Kennedys, and Rivera threw a tantrum. A less impulsive man might have stopped to consider that he had not yet signed his new contract before publicly mouthing off at the boss.

Oscars

(Continued from page 14)

Best Actress.

For this one, my preference and prediction are the same. Glenn Close, who lost (undeservedly, I thought) to Cher last year, gave an enjoyably vicious performance this year in "Dangerous Liaisons" as the manipulative and treacherous Marquise de Merteuil. Close is one of the best actresses working today and it's high time she got some recognition.

Best Supporting Actor.

I predict this one will go to Martin Landau for his performance in Francis Ford Coppola's "Tucker: The Man and His Dream." However, don't count out Dean Stockwell, who was hilarious in "Married to the Mob."

My preference is for Kevin Kline, who played the psychotic Otto in "A Fish Called Wanda."

John Cleese may have been the star, but Kline stole the show.

Best Supporting Actress.

As with the actress award, my prediction here matches my preference. Sigourney Weaver, who also is a best actress nominee for her role in "Gorillas in the Mist," is the likely winner for her role in the comedy "Working Girl."

Weaver is the first actress to be nominated for both awards since Jessica Lange in 1982. So far, every time an actress is nominated for both awards, she has taken home the award for her supporting role.

Best Director.

Usually, whoever wins the Director's Guild award wins the Oscar as well. So look for Barry Levinson ("Rain Man") to take home the director's trophy Wednesday night.

I really liked "Rain Man" a lot, but I'm afraid it is again edged out by other preferences. But in this case, I'm torn. I found Alan Parker's direction of "Mississippi

Burning" stunning from beginning to end.

Equally impressive, however, was Martin Scorsese's direction of 1988's most picked-on film, "The Last Temptation of Christ."

I think both are equally deserving. Nevertheless, Levinson is sure to win. Both Scorsese's and Parker's films are considered too controversial.

Considering the number of movies released in a year, it is inevitable that many will be overlooked when Oscar nominations are made. The following are a few of my picks for the most underrated movies of 1988.

• "Eight Men Out." One of several baseball films released last year ("Bull Durham" being another), "Eight Men Out" focuses on the so-called "Black Sox scandal" that shook major league baseball in 1919.

John Sayles' film features notable performances by John Cusack and D.B. Sweeney and deals with issues that reach far beyond the

outfield wall.

• "Monkey Shines." The best of the year's horror films from one of the finest in the genre, George A. Romero.

Rather than assaulting viewers with scenes of zombies chomping on human flesh as he did in "Night of the Living Dead," Romero puts the violence on a more subtle, psychological level. Available on video.

• "The Moderns." Keith Carradine and John Lone play an American painter and a ruthless art dealer in this story of life in the Paris art world during the 1920s.

Director Alan Rudolph provides a stylish look at the age of modern art and American expatriates. Available on video.

• "Talk Radio." This low-budget film centers on a controversial radio talk show host (Eric Bogosian) and his slow self-destruction amidst threats from neo-Nazi lunatics. Another winner from director Oliver Stone.