

Reviews

Local progressive rock trio brings talent, originality to music scene

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

The Monads are Bryan-College Station's leading progressive rock band. On their self-titled, 10-song demo tape, this trio presents some danceable, original rock in the style of early R.E.M. or Violent Femmes. The songs boast consistently clean vocals, an occasional psychedelic guitar bite and musical and songwriting skills aplenty.

Richard Ardoin (guitar, vocals), Mark Daniel (bass) and Scott Dunlap (drums) make up the trio.

Many bands have problems with members leaving and having to find replacements, but with these guys, the problem was finding a band name to stick with. They called themselves the Rain for a while, then the Killbillies, before settling on the Monads.

Dunlap cites the Smiths, R.E.M. and Jane's Addiction as influences on the band's music.

The music itself is a treat, not a weak track in the bunch. Most of the songs move at a fairly rapid pace, driven by Daniel's bass licks and Dunlap's relentless drumming. On some songs, Dunlap must wear his arms out from his energetic flailing at drums and cymbals.

Meanwhile, against the rhythms of Daniel and Dunlap, Ardoin plays quick, catchy guitar passages, but occasionally flexes his musical muscles by playing short solos with some grunge power to them.

Ardoin is a capable vocalist, as well. The Monads' songs, like those



Members of the College Station band The Monads, from left to right: Scott Dunlap (drums),

Richard Ardoin (guitar and vocals), and Mark Daniel (bass).

Photo by Jay Janner

of many modern rock bands, are often difficult to decipher in terms of message or meaning, so I won't attempt any deep interpretation of the lyrics. This task is best left to the listeners.

All of the songs on the tape are

good, but some really stand out. One is the opening track, "My Lucky Day," which is a good introduction to the Monads' sound.

"Swinging Man," with Dunlap's short, sharp drum rolls, is another

highlight, as is Ardoin's stinging guitar work on the funky "5 Finger Welfare." There are numerous other memorable moments on this tape, but let's just say that these guys are definitely one of the brightest spots in the local music scene.

Hitchcock 'n' Egyptians eclectic yet nondescript

Robyn Hitchcock 'n' the Egyptians
Queen Elvis
A&M Records
***1/2

By Suzanne Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Expect the eclectic on Robyn Hitchcock 'n' the Egyptians' new release, *Queen Elvis*. This folk-rock band has an interesting style that is all its own, although there is nothing overly exciting or extraordinary on the album.

The band seems to be fond of sudden rhythm and pace changes, which contrasts the continuous lyrical guitar played by Peter Buck and Hitchcock in most of the songs. The instrumentals combined with the lyrics give the album a dream-state quality. Most of the lyrics are surrealistic, if not ambivalent.

For example, in "The Devil's Coachman," Hitchcock sings, "The universe is based on sullen entropy — it falls apart as it goes on," and "Yesterday I saw the Devil in my food. I wasn't hungry, but I played with it."

The band also uses different "instruments" to create unique sounds. In "Knife," keyboard player Andy Metcalfe "plays" a fire extinguisher.

The Quartet Zu, a string quartet, can be heard in "The Devil's Coachman," and in "Veins of the Queen" Dave Woodhead plays the trumpet score he wrote to give the song a royal sound.

Hitchcock, who wrote and co-produced (with Metcalfe) all the songs on the album, presents some bizarre ideas and images in his songs.

In "Veins of the Queen," he dreams about being able to say he has traveled through the veins of the queen, because it would be the closest anyone ever had been to her. It is an interesting concept, although it seems that Hitchcock went on a rhyming binge when he wrote some of the lines like, "O the Queen and her cellar full of dogs/ Wonder has she any frogs/ Does she ever chop up logs?"

Hitchcock's voice is hoarse and very deep in some places, but you can hear him struggling to reach

the extremely low and high notes in songs like "Knife."

The lyrics are about a knife about to take someone's life, but the listener discovers that it is only a dream that keeps repeating itself. This song mirrors the tone of the whole album. Hitchcock's ideas in the lyrics are complex, but he includes a humorous line to remind the listener to stop trying to analyze the music.

"Freeze" is one of the better songs on the album. It starts out slow and increases to a frenzied tempo before slowing down again. It is a song about a guy who lost his girl, Elaine, to a guy named Ray. Because of his loss, he charges that whoever wrote the book of love was an idiot and a fool.

"Superman" is a chaotic song. The guitar played by Hitchcock in the beginning sounds like a slow country-western song. Then it speeds up and suddenly stops. Hitchcock sings way off key and off beat (on purpose, for an artistic effect, I would assume). It is interesting to hear his British accent, which is especially noticeable when he pronounces the "r" in "privacy" to rhyme with "crib" instead of "kite."

"One Long Pair of Eyes" has surrealistic lyrics. If the song is about anything I guess it would be about the power a girl had over a guy because she was so strikingly beautiful, but it is hard to say for sure.

What makes the lyrics so hard to understand is the fact that Hitchcock sings with little emotion. It is hard to tell if he is satirizing other musicians, himself, or the situations that he sings about. It is not clear if he is even trying to be satirical, humorous or mad about anything. The album is not for the lazy listener because he must decide what Hitchcock 'n' the Egyptians are trying to communicate through their music.

Queen Elvis is an interesting album that is easy to like if you are fond of the slightly unusual. It is not fantastic, but it is not bad either. Its redeeming quality is that it is different.

Thanks to Music Express for loaning this album for review.

Film '1969' paints moving portrait of war-torn era

"1969"
Starring Kiefer Sutherland
Directed by Ernest Thompson
Rated R
***1/2
By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

"1969" is an often-moving look at the war that raged in America over the war being fought in the jungles of Vietnam.

Writer/director Ernest Thompson has made a film that captures the turbulence of the late 1960s and features brilliant performances by two of Hollywood's most talented young actors, Kiefer Sutherland and Robert Downey Jr.

At the same time, however, "1969" tends to be overly sentimental.

Sutherland and Downey star as

Scott and Ralph, best friends enrolled at a small Maryland college. Both are students for the same reason: to avoid the draft.

Scott is the serious-minded, studious type; Ralph, the party animal.

During the film, we get to know both characters and we sympathize with at least one. Scott, philosophically opposed to the war, fails to get any understanding at all from his war veteran father (Bruce Dern) or from his Vietnam-bound Marine brother, Alden (Christopher Wyner).

Ralph couldn't care less about protesting the war or much about the war itself. All he knows is that he wants no part of it. To him, the most important things in life are girls and drugs.

"1969" includes many scenes you would expect to see in a film set in late 1960s America: campus riots, a somber protest march, and so forth.

The scene of a campus riot is one of the film's high points.

Ralph and Scott, their visiting mothers and Ralph's sister, Beth, are all caught in the riot as students trying to seize a building are battered by club-wielding police.

Thompson's direction gives the scene an appropriate sense of confusion and disorder.

One of the most emotional moments, when one must struggle to hold the tears back, is when Scott learns that Alden is missing in action in Vietnam. This leads Scott and Ralph to break into a selective service office to destroy their draft files.

One of the best things about this film is that it avoids cliches, even when opportunities for them are ripe.

The scenes of Scott and Ralph hitting the road in Scott's wildly painted van, for example, had the potential to be the same old story of

two hippies going on the road to "find freedom" or whatever it is they're supposed to do. But it turns out the two friends return home after a brief stay with a nudist colony.

Downey and Sutherland are excellent from start to finish as Ralph and Scott. Add the fine supporting players and there is not a weak link in the cast.

The film boasts a great soundtrack that features music from the period depicted. The music includes songs by the group Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; Jimi Hendrix; Creedence Clearwater Revival; Eric Burdon and the Animals; and others.

"1969" is a movie that does not seem to be out to make a statement about the era or to lecture about the lessons of Vietnam. Its purpose seems to be to present a portrait of an era the way it was.

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 — **Medicine Tribe** benefit. \$3 cover.

Friday — **Dana Cooper**. Rock 'n' roll. \$4 cover.

Saturday — **Preston Reed**. Acoustic. \$5 cover.

Cow Hop Annex
Next to the restaurant at Northgate. Those 18 and older admitted. Alcohol served to legal drinkers. Call 696-5522 for more information.

Thursday — **Patio Furniture**. Rock. Cover.

Friday — **Sneaky Pete and the Neon Madmen**. Classic rock. Cover.

Saturday — **Subculture**. Dance rock. Cover.

Wednesday — **Singalong with Sneaky Pete**. \$1 cover.

Emiliano's
In Bryan at 502 W. 25th St. Beer, wine and set-ups served. Call 775-9539 for more information.

Friday — **Tierra Tejana**. Spanish. Cover \$5-\$6.

Frank's Bar and Grill
In College Station at 503 E. University Drive. All ages are admitted. Beer, wine and liquor are served to legal drinkers. Call 846-5388 for more information.

No live music scheduled for this weekend.

Kay's Cabaret
At Post Oak Mall. Those 18 and over are admitted. Beer, wine and liquor served to legal drinkers. For more information, call 696-9191.

Thursday — **Further the Curve**. Rock. \$2 cover.

Friday — **Blueshound**. Rock/blues. \$2 cover.

Saturday — **Don Overby**. Originals and classic oldies. No 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.

Fletch Lives. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.

Lean On Me. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Dead Bang. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Ends Friday.

Cyborg. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Opens Friday.

Post Oak Three
Located in the Post Oak Mall. Call 693-2796 for more information.

Working Girl. Rated R. Show-

times are 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. Ends Friday.

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Chances Are. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:10 p.m. and 9:20 p.m.

Dream Team. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. Opens Friday.

Schulman Six
In Bryan at 2002 E. 29th Street. Call 775-2643 for more information.

Twins. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.

The Naked Gun. Rated PG-13. Showtimes are 7:10 p.m. and 9:25 p.m.

Her Alibi. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:15 p.m. and 9:35 p.m.

The Fly II. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:05 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

1969. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:55 p.m.

Troop Beverly Hills. Rated PG. Showtimes are 7:25 p.m. and 9:50 p.m.

Plaza Three
In College Station at 226 Southwest Parkway. Call 693-2457 for more information.

Rain Man. Rated R. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:35 p.m.

Leviathan. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:20 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.

Skin Deep. Rated R. Showtimes are 7:10 p.m. and 9:50 p.m.

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

TOWN HALL

Concerts

Informational Meeting
Monday, April 10 th.
225 MSC
7:00 P.M.

For People With Diverse Musical Interests And Who
Want To Apply For Town Hall Next Year.
We Will Talk About Different Subcommittees And Expectations.

TOWN HALL: Brings quality local, regional, and national talent
to A & M campus, student body, and
Bryan / College Station community.

Applications will be available at this meeting and are currently available in the
Town Hall cube located in 216 MSC. Due Friday, April 15 th. by 5:00 P.M.

Applications

Applications Available
through April 19 in
Reed McDonald
Room 230

AGGIELAND

Due
April 19
in Room 230
Reed McDonald

staff applications

'Wo

CLEAR LAKE Perched on the day boat, Pat sailing book on tiller as she flips

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New O creole

NEW YORK called the "hear leans."

And in music Brothers are kn musicians."

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The brothers Charles and Cyri tually for more t fore they finally

verse talents in albums and a tw band has just rele "Yellow Moon."

The collection original songs, is political and per which they expre social issues.

The album's Rosa," is a tribute became one of t civil rights move she refused to gi white person on Montgomery, A number, written percussionist Cy