

## Cult's set 'short, strong, simple' after over-hyped opening bands

By JOHN RIGHTER  
Of The Battalion Staff

Gothic smashers The Cult must believe that great things come in small packages.

Playing to a half-filled Summit in downtown Houston Friday night, The Cult worked smoothly through a rapid, 13-song set. The hour-and-fifteen-minute show was largely a greatest hits package that highlighted most of 1989's *Sonic Temple*.

Opening for The Cult were the Van Halen-styled Tora Tora and Bonham. Bonham, a band founded by Jason Bonham, son of former Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham, played just before The Cult.

Bonham is yet another weak Led Zeppelin ripoff. Their 45-minute set featured most of their debut album *The Disregard of Timekeeping* and ended with a lengthy encore.

Jason began the encore by eulogizing his deceased father (John Bonham died in the late 1970s), before Bonham pummeled into a lethargic version of "Black Dog." Sadly, the song drew the largest ovation of the evening, a pitiful documentation of how blind love can

distort an audience's senses. Another interesting aspect of Bonham's set was how loud Jason's drum kit was miked. It was the first time I've ever heard a drum set drown out a guitar. Obviously, Jason

job past us. Which brings me to The Cult. During the group's tour in support of *Electric*, lead singer Ian Astbury was lifeless and removed, still entrenched with his role as the mystical

tars, not insults. But Astbury continued to chide the audience from there on, milking that act for three encores.

The Cult were impressive when they found the reception to their liking. Opening with a well-placed sound bite from Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver," the band tore into a hell's fury version of "New York City" from *Sonic Temple* before immediately breaking into "Li'l Devil."

The high-energy tandem got Cult fans on their feet and kept them there for the rest of the evening.

The balladry of "Edie," the funky "Peace Dog," from *Electric*, and a jet-fueled version of "Wildflower" (also from *Electric*) were highlights of a short, but largely sweet set.

The biggest disappointment was the band's decision to neglect *Love*. Aside from "She Sells Sanctuary," The Cult only performed the early hit "Rain" from their classic release of 1985. Outstanding tracks such as "Phoenix" and "Nirvana" were forgotten, as was "King Contrary Man" from *Electric*.

But The Cult's intent was short, strong and simple. And that, music fans, is exactly what it was.

**Just because one of these heavy-metal schlocks yells something, doesn't mean we must applaud ... After shelling out twenty bucks, I want handstands and broken guitars, not insults.**

wants to follow in his father's footsteps as top dog skin basher, but substance must follow sound, Jason.

The band attempted every cheap, heavy-metal crowd gimmick possible. Metal bands must believe that their audiences are all of the alcoholic, brain-dead, hands-in-their-pockets mentality.

Just because one of these heavy-metal schlocks yells something, doesn't mean we must applaud. I'm getting really tired of all the closed-minded remarks, party rhetoric and personal tales of superhero sexual prowess that these jerks try to snow

"wolf child." Friday night, Astbury dropped his pretenses and thrashed and jolted from start to finish, long jet-black hair flying, as he made great use of his arena-perfect voice.

Unfortunately, Astbury, in his attempts at rapport with the audience, chose to openly and frequently insult the crowd. The most amusing point of the evening came after The Cult completed an hour set, when Astbury demanded the audience prove they were worthy of an encore.

After shelling out twenty bucks, I want handstands and broken gui-

## 'Thursday Night Live' comics involve audience in routines

By TODD STONE  
Of The Battalion Staff

An Aggie, a Sagittarius and an ex-University of Texas student provided plenty of laughs to a sold-out audience at "Thursday Night Live" comedy at Garfield's.

Jason Porter, the Aggie, describes his memory of first-round exams and his future as an educator.

"I hate the first round of exams," he complained. "I'm still bleeding anally from them."

"I'm an education major, and I'll be teaching history and government in high school, so you can just call me Coach."

Kerry Awn followed Porter with discussions ranging from his views on TV evangelists to his most recent heartbreak.

On Jim Bakker: "I love Jesus," Awn said, "I love God. It's the middlemen I have a problem with."

On being a Sagittarius: "I'm half-man and half-horse," he said, "You can see my man half. I'm offering pony rides to the ladies for a dollar."

"I used to live with a model," he said. "Then it broke. There goes my weekend. What I really like is blue-haired ladies because they're slow and easy to catch."

The highlight to Awn's performance was an imitation of Mel Tillis doing a rap of a Whataburger commercial. His voice matched Tillis perfectly, and Awn declared Tillis

the first rapper because of his stutter.

Mike Vance, the headline performer, spent most of his time speaking with the audience and drawing lots of laughs, despite his admission that he once attended UT.

"I was on the two-year all-you-can-drink plan," Vance explained.

Vance was quick-witted throughout the show, finding comedy in the audience. He discovered one person who was from Los Angeles and vacationing in College Station.

"Let me get this straight," Vance said, "you're sitting under the sun at Santa Monica beach and you're thinking, 'This sucks! I need the Brazos Valley experience.'"

Another hilarious Vance discovery was a Marine sergeant who is stationed in College Station as a student.

Vance: "So do you get to carry a gun on campus?"

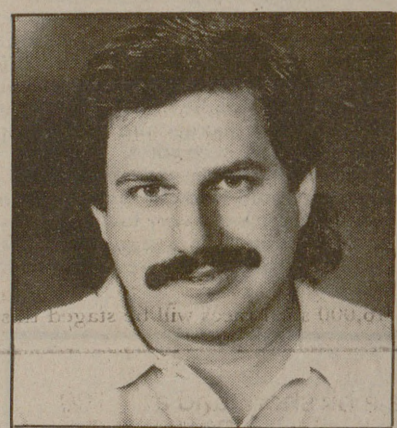
Marine: "Yes."

Vance: "What are you, the first line of defense for fraternity takeovers?"

Vance also thanked his appreciative audience.

"I want to thank the gentleman in the back," Vance said. "The highest compliment for a comedian is laughter, but when you blow beer out your nose ... now, that's appreciation."

Although the comedians' "victims" might disagree, it was the abil-



Battalion file photo

ity of all three comedians to incorporate the audience into their acts that made TNL so enjoyable.

Porter, who continues to improve as a comedian, added a local perspective. Awn's eccentric ways were oddly amusing. Vance was simply hilarious, showing why he has appeared twice on Showtime comedy specials.

Vance and Porter will perform March 28 at the Sigma Chi Derby Days charity fund raiser. Porter will continue to be the opening performer at TNL. For more information about Thursday Night Live at Garfield's call 693-1736.

## 'Red October' remains generally faithful to Clancy's techno-thriller

By TODD STONE  
Of The Battalion Staff

Supported by a strong performance by Sean Connery, "The Hunt For Red October" is a great suspense-action thriller.

Based on the novel by Tom Clancy, "Red October" combines Clancy's technical military descriptions with the action-packed directing of John McTiernan (director of "Die Hard").

For fans of the book, this film is certainly an admirable visual re-creation. The special effects of the submarines are first-rate, but McTiernan deserves praise for earning more subtle accolades.

For example, much of the narrative and dialogue occurs among Soviets. I won't tell how, but McTiernan smoothly shifts the Soviet dialogue from Russian to English during the beginning of the film.

With this deft transition of languages in the dialogue, McTiernan eliminates the need for subtitles and justifies the illogic of the Soviets' speaking English among themselves throughout the film.

That probably made life easier for the English-speaking Connery, who plays a Soviet naval hot-shot, Marko Ramius. Ramius is the commander of the Soviets' first submarine that can avoid sonar detection, the Red October.

Ramius suddenly kills the political officer, and takes the key needed to launch nuclear missiles from the Red October. As a commander, Ramius already had one of two keys. With both keys, Ramius can fire nuclear weapons at will.

He then burns his sealed orders and announces to his crew that the Red October will secretly travel to the U.S. coast to prove that the Red October can't be detected.

Meanwhile, the Soviets are trying to stop the Red October, and they tell the United States that Ramius is mad. According to the Soviets, Ramius is out to attack the United States.

However, CIA analyst Jack Ryan, played by Alec Baldwin, believes Ramius wants to defect.

### THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

Starring Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin  
Directed by John McTiernan  
Rated R

He convinces the national security adviser to let him prove Ramius' intentions.

Ryan joins the U.S. submarine Dallas, commanded by Captain Mancuso (Scott Glenn), which has been attempting to track the Red October.

What follows is a chase against the Soviets to discover if Ramius is a defector and to learn the secrets of the Red October.

The performances of Connery, Baldwin and Glenn, as well as the screenplay by Larry Ferguson and Donald Stewart, develop the memorable Clancy characters well.

The combination of performance and dialogue is vital—the characters and storyline were competing against a strong visual effort for the audience's attention. There is no winner to this race, as the film balances powerful narrative with visual excellence.

Concerned Clancy fans may want to know that the film follows the book until the climax. At that point, however, the screenplay takes a significant jump in time, and the actions of the finale are a hodge-podge combination of events from the book.

On the screen, that works if you're willing to overlook a few skips in logic. However, Clancy readers might not be pleased with the changes and lack of detail in the climax.

Still, "Red October" is already two hours and 15 minutes of suspense and intrigue. Clancy fans should be pleased with this cinematic adaptation. Other moviegoers have an exciting new movie to enjoy.

For the James Bryan College Station movie market, the "Red October" is not just a solid movie, it's an event.

## Preview: 'West Side' tells story of tragic love

By JOHN RIGHTER  
Of The Battalion Staff

MSC OPAS will present "West Side Story," an version of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" adapted to the modern-day problems of racial integration and urban poverty. **Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.**

Music Theatre Group, a troupe from New York City, will perform the two-and-a-half-hour musical that features the work of composer Leonard Bernstein and is based on the Arthur Laurents novel.

The setting of "West Side Story" is the racial conflict-torn streets of New York City in the summer of 1957. Two rival gangs, the American-born Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks, are involved in a feud over "turf" and the recent entrenchment of the Sharks in the mostly lower-class white neighborhood.

The Jets challenge the Sharks to a rumble at the school dance where Maria, the sister of Bernardo (leader of the Sharks) falls in love with Tony (a member of the Jets).

Both realize their love will be fiercely opposed by the two gangs, and especially by Chino, a Shark chosen to wed the pretty Maria.

The next day, Tony and Maria meet again and decide they must marry. Bernardo is furious about Tony and Maria's relationship and kills Riff, the leader of the Jets, at the rumble.

Tony, in a fit of anger, kills Maria's brother to avenge his leader's death. The fateful rumble sets the stage for the tragic demise of Tony and Maria's love.

Music Theatre's performance stars Zachary Robbins as Tony, Christina M. Piarro as Maria (a role made famous by Natalie Wood in the movie version of "West Side Story") and Johnny Martinez as Bernardo.

All troupe members are professional stage performers and veterans of "West Side Story."

The Music Theatre's adaptation is directed by William Westbrook and choreographed by George Russell and Daniel Pelzig.

The sets, reproductions of New York City streets, a drugstore, a gymnasium, a bridal shop and Maria's bedroom, are designed by James Bush.

Musically, "West Side Story" is famous for its collaboration of composer Leonard Bernstein and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. The play is fast-paced, highlighted by the fight/dance scenes where the company sings together.

"One Hand, One Heart," a duo between Tony and Maria in the bridal shop, and "Somewhere," a company song that pits the Jets against the Sharks, la Michael Jackson's "Beat It," are standout numbers.

Tickets are on sale at Rudder Box Office. For more information, call 845-1234.

## Soviet jazz pianist gaining following in Dallas club

DALLAS (AP) — Monday night jam sessions at D'Jazz club draw an eclectic crowd, from haute amateurs to veterans of the Dallas jazz scene.

There's a dentist who regularly flies his plane down from Tulsa to jam for a few hours. Saxophonist Marchel Ivery, dean of the local scene, might drop by, or Tim Alexander, accordionist with the country-swing band "Asleep At The Wheel."

But this Monday night is special. All the way from Moscow, just three days off the plane, a very nervous Gregory Slavin sits down at the piano. Every eye in the room is on him.

He's going to play the jazz standard "Green Dolphin Street" — that much has been established. But nobody's sure yet what key he's going to play it in.

Slavin doesn't know any English and the other musicians don't know any Russian.

Within a few bars, everybody in the north Dallas club agrees that Slavin may not know English, but he sure speaks the language.

The language is jazz, and Slavin has been speaking it since he played Gershwin as a Moscow teen-ager. He learned it from the black market Charlie Parker records, passed along the Moscow underground, and from jazz broadcasts on the Voice of America.

"He would stand in front of the music stores and ask if anyone had any records to trade," says his friend, Lev Zaltsberg, translating.

It was Lev Zaltsberg who brought Slavin here — to Dallas' D'Jazz Club. "He's my best friend," says Zaltsberg, a food-service manager for a retirement home.

"I've known him since we were 8-

year-olds in Moscow. We sat side by side in school."

Eventually, Slavin went on to conservatory training, and in 1976 Zaltsberg emigrated to the United States. "The chances were we'd never see each other again," he says.

But a little over a year ago, when Zaltsberg's aunt came to Dallas to visit, she brought a message from Gregory.

Zaltsberg called his old friend in Moscow, and the two began writing

**Slavin doesn't know any English and the other musicians don't know any Russian. Within a few bars, everybody in the north Dallas club agrees that Slavin may not know English, but he sure speaks the language. The language is jazz, and Slavin has been speaking it since he played Gershwin as a Moscow teen-ager.**

regularly, taking up their friendship where they had left it 13 years before.

Slavin had built quite a career for himself, as careers go in the Soviet Union. He was teaching improvisation in a Moscow conservatory, performing concerts and playing in a chic nightclub. "The Prague," right next to the Kremlin.

The concerts paid well, he says, but the repertoire was controlled by the Ministry of Culture, an agency not known for venturesome tastes. At least the "Prague" patrons were willing to listen to some jazz along with a steady stream of 1960s-era Russian and American popular songs.

Not surprisingly, Slavin had been

thinking of leaving the Soviet Union.

"I told him I have limited facilities," Zaltsberg says, "but I would love for him to come here and I would do my best for him. I told him that Texans were very friendly."

Although not a jazz fan himself, he set about finding a club where Gregory might at least get acquainted with the local jazz scene.

When he spotted a newspaper ad for D'Jazz, he phoned the manager and

asked if he could bring Gregory in. There is an irony in all this. During the years Slavin was scrounging for records, for any scrap of information on jazz, the music was becoming an endangered species here in the land of its birth.

One by one, the old Dallas jazz clubs dropped by the wayside, pushed out by the business of rock. D'Jazz is one of the very last places in the city where the faithful still gather.

"It's very tough to make it here as a jazz musician," says manager Michele Sanders. Most of those who show up to play Monday nights work regular eight-hour jobs before they come to the club. Few earn their livings as musicians.

## Nantucket residents accept ghosts as real phenomena

NANTUCKET, Mass. (AP) — Maybe it's the bleak setting of windswept beaches, brooding moors and gray, weatherbeaten houses. Perhaps it's all the ships lost off the coast, carrying terrified souls into the stormy Atlantic.

Whatever the reason, there are ghosts on Nantucket. Just ask the people with stories to tell.

"One person I knew thought it

had something to do with the moor," says Blue Balliett, who compiled 23 ghost sightings from tiny island off the coast of Cape Cod and put them into a book. "I don't know what it is, but there are a lot of ghosts on Nantucket."

Peter Benchley, author of the book "Jaws," spent a summer on Nantucket in the late 1960s. He told Balliett that one afternoon he went from a nap to see a fire burning in the fireplace.

A longhaired old man, dressed in 18th-century clothing, was slow rocking in a rocking chair in front of the fire. A moment later, the man and the fire had disappeared, and the rocking chair lay still.

Out on the island's windswept eastern coast, normally level-headed Coast Guard officers keeping watch over the 140-year-old Sankaty light house say a spirit haunts the nearby dormitory.

Petty Officer Doug Clark says ghost scatters pots and pans over the kitchen floor, opens locked doors and spooks the dorm dog.

But the Coast Guard men don't put up with too many ghostly gags. "We'll hear it making funny thumps at night. We just yell, 'Know it off,' and it goes."

Joanne Shaw, a Nantucket resident since 1972, recalls when she and her family lived in a 19th-century farmhouse in the center of the island that was haunted by the ghost of a little girl they called Emily.

"She came down the stairs one day, right in front of me," Shaw says. "She was about 10 years, with a dress covering her face. I watched her for a minute, and then when I started getting scared she disappeared."

The girl stayed mostly in a third-floor bedroom in the house. She appeared to Shaw and her son, Jimmy, at various times for about two years.

Then came the day Shaw was taking a nap and felt the weight of someone getting into the bed next to her. She was frozen with fear for a moment, then jumped out of bed and screamed, "Get out of here. The ghost never returned."

The hauntings sometimes have real estate deals on the island. "A lot of people won't even look at a house with a reputation for being haunted," agent Gary Winn said.

"But we don't have any haunted listings at the moment," he added.