

10,000 Maniacs' new album explores Eden with powerful poetry and catchy melodies

By TODD BLACKMON

Arts & Entertainment Editor of THE BATTALION

10,000 Maniacs
"Our Time in Eden"
Elektra Records



the roses in the garden, beauty and thorns among our leaves. To pick a rose you ask your hands to bleed. What is the reason for having roses when your blood is shed carelessly?"

The song "If You Intend" continues questioning, saying: "God, if you persist you'll die like this, and wither in the midst of your first season, cut down with no reason. How can you be so near and not see everything?"

Merchant is backed by the Maniacs' usual lineup—guitarist Rob Buck, bassist Steve Gustafson, drummer Jerome Augustyniak, and Merchant's own haunting piano playing. The folksy pop arrangements the band creates provide a nice backdrop for Merchant's voice. On several songs string arrangements add to the emotional depth of the lyrics and lend added strength.

The emotional depth of the song lyrics is a primary strength of the album, but the listener doesn't have to agree with Merchant's subject matter to enjoy it. "Our Time in Eden" is truly a record lover's time in paradise.

With the release of their new album, 10,000 Maniacs takes a troubled look at the struggles of heavenly belief, and guides the listener through the bitterness of a lost Eden. The album is powerful, intriguing and quite possibly the best album the Maniacs have produced.

One thing I've discovered about 10,000 Maniacs' previous albums is that the catchy upbeat melodies seem to contradict the serious, thought-provoking lyrics. "Our Time in Eden" is no exception, but that's not to say such contrast is negative. In fact, such diversity makes the band that much more enjoyable.

The album's most appealing aspect is Natalie Merchant's clear, bright voice. The simple, catchy melodies are enjoyable even if you don't concentrate on what she is saying. Merchant's voice grabs

10,000 Maniacs' new album has deep lyrics and upbeat melodies.

the listener's attention away from the songs' meaning.

However, that doesn't mean the words should be ignored. Each song is like poetry in blank verse, and I enjoyed reading the lyrics before I listened to the songs.

Many of the songs are filled with Biblical themes and imagery and deal with the struggles and hopes of Christian beliefs.

The lyrics of "Eden" illustrate the Maniacs' views on the mixed blessings of paradise: "We are

Cellist performs at Brown Bag luncheon

By ANAS BEN-MUSA

Reviewer of THE BATTALION

The resounding notes of a cello will be heard at Wednesday's Brown Bag Concert at 12:30 p.m. in 402 Academic. Cellist David



Garrett will play Antonio Vivaldi's "Sonata No. 5 in E minor" and Sergei Rachmaninov's "Sonata in G Minor, Opus 19."

Accompanying him on the piano will be Junko Ueno.

Garrett is currently performing with the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

He is well-versed in the standard repertoire of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras.

In addition, Garrett is an estab-

lished professor of music and has taught at Ball State University, the University of Texas at San Antonio and Trinity University.

KAMU-FM 90.9, Texas A&M's public radio station, will broadcast his performance.

The Brown Bag Concert is presented by the OPAS Stark Series and the Department of Philosophy and Humanities' Music Program.

'A River Runs Through It' meanders without a plot

By JENNY MAGEE

Reviewer for THE BATTALION

"A River Runs Through It"
Starring Craig Sheffer, Brad Pitt, Tom Skerrit
Directed by Robert Redford
Rated PG
Playing at Post Oak Mall Cinema

A river might have run through it, but I never exactly figured out where the river was running to.

"A River Runs Through It", Robert Redford's latest directing excursion, is a story in the purest sense of the word. Unfortunately, it is a story that lacks an extremely important essential—a plot.

The story is told by Norman McClain (Craig Sheffer), who is a product of Montana Presbyterianism with an order of fly fishing on the side.

At his father's suggestion, Norman is telling the story of his family. Primarily, Norman's memories meander through the relationship he has with his brother Paul (Brad Pitt).

Unfortunately, it takes two hours and 10 minutes to establish the fact that Norman is the smart sibling and Paul is the charming rebel.

Norman is the one who has inherited the reserved perception of his father's sermons, and Paul is destined for trouble from the outset.

But however different the two brothers may be, they are bound by one love—fly fishing.

In the clear waters of their river, they learn and practice the art of fly fishing. It is something that separates them from the world, yet binds them to each other.

First of all, let me begin by saying that the

scenery in the movie is absolutely incredible. I am seriously ready to pack my bags and head out for Montana. If you are a nature freak the movie is worth seeing on that count alone.

However, to put it bluntly, I spent the entire movie waiting for something of great significance to happen.

This might have been because in the opening narration, Norman relays to the audience a message from his father, who said, "Norman, one day when you are ready, you should tell the story of our family; only then will you understand."

Maybe it's just me, but I always take those "only then will you understand" lines as a big hint. I sat up a little straighter in my chair and prepared for something monumental. Needless to say, all I got out of that was a big backache.

I have come to the conclusion that the basis for "A River Runs Through It" is life. Not exceptional or unique life, just plain life.

I feel like some sort of artistic degenerate for not being able to appreciate the simplistic quality of the movie. But I want some suspense, some sort defined story line, or at least some romance.

No one even kisses.

Pardon me for being girlie, but I find that to be a darn shame when you have a movie that stars Brad Pitt and Craig Sheffer.

I don't want to give the impression that the movie was a total flop. There was just never anything defined or concrete about the direction of the story's message.

But maybe that was the point. I mean, a river's flow is constant. It does not matter to a river if today is your wedding day or if you got lemon juice in your paper cut today. It doesn't matter. The river will still follow the same course.

All right, this is a real neat analogy and all, but I don't want to have to work this hard to justify a movie.

While "A River Runs Through It" was a scenic trip, the water was a little too calm for my taste.



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