

A&M theater group captures state awards

By Margaret Claughton

THE BATTALION

Both the actors and the director of Texas A&M's Theatre Inkululeko received top honors and numerous awards at this year's Texas Southeast Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival.

A&M students Sam Levassar, Steve Mize, and Rapulana Seiphemo performed Paul Slabolepszy's "Saturday Night At the Palace," a hard hitting South African play that addresses the social and ethnic issues as well as the political strife of South Africa.

"Saturday Night At the Palace" was named Critic's Choice and Directors' Choice at the festival. Adjudicator Becky Prophet in her critique of Inkululeko's performance said, "A fine production of a very powerful script with a powerful interpretation and some very powerful acting."

Theatre Inkululeko was given a Certificate of Excellence for Ensemble Acting and each cast member was given a Certificate of Excellence for acting. All three members were nominated for the Irene Ryan Award, a scholarship competition which culminates at the national festival in Washington, D.C. in April.

"I knew they were working hard and I knew they were capable, but the awards were still surprising," said Dr. Roger Schultz, A&M theatre professor and director of Theatre Inkululeko.

In addition to the production's other awards, a Certificate of Excellence in Directing and a Certificate of Excellence in Scenic Design were awarded to Schultz.

"The acting style, combined with the blocking, the use of the set, and the pointing of specific moments was really powerful," Prophet said.

Cast member Mize was elated at the production's success.

"We were all surprised," Mize said. "This might open other people's eyes to not just look at American plays and American playwrights."

"Saturday Night At the Palace" is the first of a series of multicultural plays all part of Theatre Inkululeko. Schultz created the idea of Theatre Inkululeko after spending the summer of 1991 in the township theaters of South Africa. The purpose of Theatre Inkululeko is to depict the diversity of the world through plays and to show that "the world is not a vanilla place," as Schultz said.

"When a production like ours wins," Schultz said, "it encourages other universities to do the same kind of play that we are doing - the kind that addresses the sociopolitical issues of our time."

WITH THE TOUCH OF A SCREEN

Getting the music you want at your door

By Joe Leih
THE BATTALION

There is a new way to find and purchase albums without exploring a single record store.

And amazingly enough, it's not even illegal or detrimental to your health.

It's clean, safe and possible through Campus Records in the Texas A&M Bookstore.

Campus Records has developed a kiosk or computer terminal stand that has a database of approximately 100,000 album titles.

Anyone can browse through the collection by punching any performer, song title, album title or musical category on a touch screen. Plus, the terminal offers additional information such as record reviews and if the album is available on CD, record or cassette.

After viewing the information, the album can be ordered with a major credit card and delivered in 72 hours.

Gary Spearow, general manager of bookstore operations, said that Campus Records' album listing is more comprehensive than any conventional record store.

"Its programming is updated frequently, and I haven't seen too many people not be able to find what they want on it," he said.

Spearow also said Campus Records' amount of information available about the albums is more vast than any record store employee's expertise.

"Buying a record is a very personalized sale where you need a lot of knowledge at your disposal," he said. "In retail, there isn't always that knowledge."

But Spearow said that Campus Records will hardly steal any business from the local record stores.

"The niche that it is really filling is the people that normally wouldn't go to those markets," he said. "Campus Records is for people who want speed and convenience. There won't be any direct competition."

Stephen Maupin, co-owner and manager of CD Warehouse, also said that Campus Records will not hurt local retailers.

"I think it's interesting," said Maupin, a senior business major. "But customers would like to see what they are going to get. They would be hesitant on ordering through the mail."

But Lewis South, a former student and user of Campus Records, believes the future of record stores just might be in peril.

"It's so simple," he said. "Instead of wandering through the store you just punch it in. Something like this could make record stores obsolete."



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

Chris Meyer, a sophomore forest science major from Garland, attempts to order Pearl Jam's new album "five against one" from Campus Records. With approximately 100,000 album titles, any album can be ordered and received in 72 hours.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Country greats sing Eagles hits

By Lesa Ann King

THE BATTALION

"Common Thread: The Songs of the Eagles"
The Eagles
Country
Giant records

Country music's finest entertainers have come together to recreate the enduring sound of one of the all-time classic rock-country bands in "Common Thread: The Songs of the Eagles."

The project demonstrates not only the powerful legacy of The Eagles, but the generosity of the country music

community and its commitment to the environment with a portion of the royalties benefiting the Walden Woods Project.

Founded by Don Henley in 1990, the project helps protect the woodland area surrounding Walden Pond.

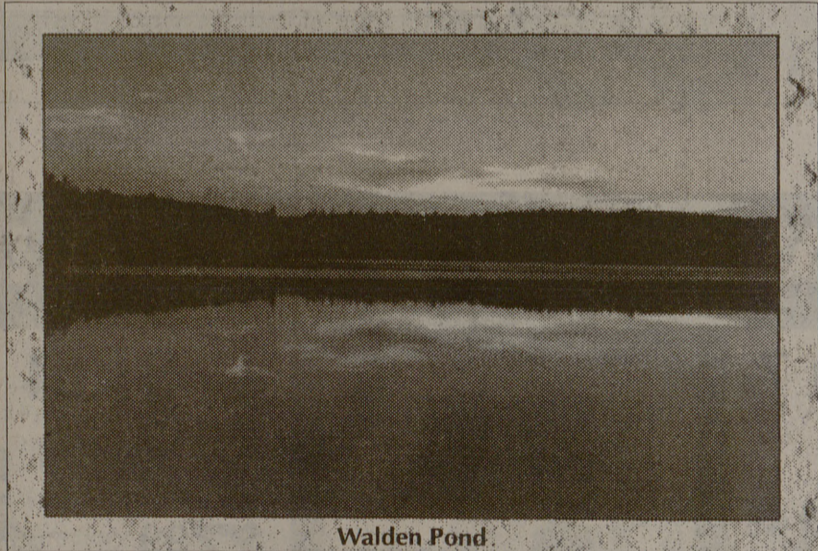
Artists contributing to the album include Vince Gill, Lorrie Morgan, Billy Dean, John Anderson, Clint Black, Suzy Bogguss, Brooks & Dunn, Trisha Yearwood, Little Texas, Diamond Rio, Alan Jackson, Tanya Tucker and Travis Tritt. These artists perform such classic Eagles hits as "Lying Eyes," "Desperado," "Heartache Tonight," "New Kid In Town" and many others.

During their 10-year career, the Eagles - Don Henley, Glenn Frey, Don Felder, Randy Meisner, Bernie Leadon, Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit - sold over 80 million albums worldwide, had four number one albums, five number one singles, four Grammy Awards and countless sold-out tours throughout the world.

"Common Thread" reflects the strong influences the Eagles have had on the new generation of country artists.

"A lot of artists, when listing musical influences, talk about the Eagles," recalls Trisha Yearwood. "I think everybody involved in this project sang

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Walden Pond

Concrete Blonde barely succeeds with new album 'Mexican Moon'

By Joe Leih

THE BATTALION

"Mexican Moon"
Concrete Blonde
Capitol Records

Ever since Concrete Blonde's debut eight years ago, the members have continued to crank out their own blend of intense, gloomy rock-n-roll.

"Mexican Moon," their fifth album, proves that they have hardly changed their style.

Guitarist James Mankey still renders his distorted, shimmering guitar picking and bassist/vocalist Johnette

Napolitano still croons with mournful huskiness.

In fact, Napolitano's vocal antics are the high point of the album.

Her high wavering chorus in "Heal It Up" skillfully casts a disturbed feeling of urgency and her gospel-tinged solo in "Jesus Forgive Me (For the Things I'm About to Say)" gives a new slant to the word soulful.

However, Napolitano's vocal experiments don't always succeed. Her dubbed-in harmony on the Latin style "Ai yi yi's" of "Mexican Moon" sound incredibly cheap, and her chorus on "Jesus" is painfully reminiscent of a bad disco choir.

But most of the flaws are hidden by the band's talent for setting the tones of each tune. Mankey's Spanish guitar and Harry Rushakoff's percussion playing instill "Mexican Moon" with a beautiful Spanish flavor; and Paul Thompson's ever-pounding drums on "Jesus" keep the song's pulse alive.

Overall it's the skill of the band members that has enabled them to make "Mexican Moon" a success, but this trio must watch its future projects very closely. The members just might distinguish their style so much, that their music becomes repetitive and boring.

It almost did on this one.



Mankey, Napolitano and Rushakoff.