

# From Comics to Reel life

By **Josef Elchanan**  
THE BATTALION

**O**n the movie screen, chrome-plated guns blaze and razor-sharp knives flash. Costumed vigilantes and superheroes come to life, attacking criminals in all their evil guises.

Yet the superheroes' origins were many times not so flashy - they came from newspaper.

Past money-making films like the two Batman movies, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' trilogy, and the Superman movies came from a less glamorous - yet no less revered place - than Hollywood. And so did recent and upcoming films like "The Crow," "The Shadow," and "The Mask."

These films originated from a melding of artwork and literature, the tales of supervillains, future civilizations, and, most importantly, heroes found in comic books

which can be found at Bryan-College Station comic book shops.

Guy Jones, owner of BCS Books & Comics, said movies generally remain pretty faithful to their original comic book screenplays.

"Overall, (they do a good job), but a lot of times the films change a few things," Jones said.

For instance, David Lytle, owner of Lytle's Comics and Games, said the Batman films did not meet everyone's expectations, but still stuck to the Batman theme.

"Die-hard Batman fans didn't like it, (but) I felt it gave a dark feel," Lytle said.

Lytle cited the period of increased comic book interest following the Batman movie's release as "The explosion."

"That's ending now, or earlier, (but it) was spectacular," Lytle said. "Most stores opened for that market."

Clarence Mahaffey, Mark Ramsey,

And Kevin Franzen, co-owners of Purple Cactus Books and Comics, said they started selling comic books at conventions and trade shows, doing it for extra money.

After enough inventory was built, their Purple Cactus store opened.

The local comic book store owners discussed the perception many people have of comic book readers. Mahaffey said comics are read by all types of people, saying most of his customers were adults.

Lytle agreed: "We have professors who come in here - they like this stuff."

For a new generation of comics, owners mentioned titles like Sandman and Sin City, comics geared toward the more mature readers, much as traditional comics, like X-Men and certain Batman titles.

For the adult reader, comic books have the visual direction of television and movies, the writing of novels, and cost much less than either.



Photo illustration by Stew Milne/The BATTALION

Popular comic book characters have leaped out of their newspaper pages to the big screen. **Batman** (left), has been played by Michael Keaton in the first two movies, but will be

played in an upcoming film by Val Kilmer. **The Crow** (middle), was played by the late Brandon Lee. **The Shadow** (right), has been played by Alec Baldwin.

The owners differed concerning the role comics should have. Mahaffey said comics made "good investments," as well as good reading.

Jones held the converse theory. "Comic books are not meant to be collectible, but to be read," Jones said. "You can have more than a minute of entertainment from comics."

Lytle said that comic books can offer something for everyone - from titles ranging from the Japanese Manga to Archie.

"If you haven't read comic books in the last three to four years, you should pick one up," Lytle said. "You'll find a big difference."

## Resort offers fun without the clothes

For the people on the Live Oak Ranch, recreation - not entertainment - forms the enjoyment of nudism

By **Jeremy Keddie**  
THE BATTALION

**T**raveling west along Highway 105, between Navasota and Brenham, homes are separated by cattle-laden pastures, windmills pump water, and vendors sell vegetables and barbecue along the roadside. But one sign may appear unusual to the passing eye.

"Adopt a Highway - Next 2 Miles - Live Oak Nudist Resort"

And it is this sign which indicates the presence of Texas' largest nudist resort, located in Washington, Texas.

Viewed by some as an alternative lifestyle, Live Oak member and employee, Jennifer Nunez said she believes the public has misconceptions about nudism and nudist resorts - such as Live Oak Ranch.

Nunez said people tend to confuse nude recreation and entertainment. Those who confuse the two often make the members of a nudist community uncomfortable while visiting.

"The same rules, etiquette and morals apply as they do outside," Nunez said.

With last week being National Nude Recreation Week, The American Sunbathing Association established two goals for the association:

"To make the general public aware that nude recreation is an activity enjoyed by regular people from all walks of life, and to show people what good neighbors nudists can be and the positive things they do for the community."

Nunez said nudists choose their lifestyle for a variety of reasons. One of which claims individuals view each other as equals, because clothes tend to indicate the socioeconomic status of individuals.

"Nudists are friendly and very trustworthy since everyone is more vulnerable when naked," said Nunez.



Stew Milne/The BATTALION

Nunez began visiting Live Oak on the weekends, enjoyed it, and then chose to move to the resort. She said she chooses to practice her lifestyle in secluded environments because the public sometimes alienates nudists, which makes them uncomfortable.

"I detest Hippy Hollow," Nunez said of the nude hangout on Travis Lake. "It made me uncomfortable with all the pointing and gawking."

Although nudism is not legal there, Nunez said law enforcement used discretion in the past and left nudists alone.

Linda Krabill, another employee of Live Oak, said actions that make nudists uncomfortable are not tolerated at the resort. In order to protect nudists, resorts generally establish rules.

"No laughing, staring, pointing and always sit on a towel," Krabill said.

Live Oak Ranch has ways of screening their guests to insure security. The resort requires first time visitors to fill out a personal information form and file a copy of their driver's license with the resort. Information on Live Oak's clientele is confidential and is used to prevent troublemakers from entering other resorts.

Krabill said individuals, such as perverts, who

make nudists uncomfortable can be tracked through The American Sunbathing Association.

The rules are meant to protect everyone so they feel comfortable, although Krabill said Live Oak has only a few problems each year.

"The most difficult thing for newcomers is to be nude in a non sexual situation," Krabill said.

Krabill suggested newcomers begin nudism with a pace which they are comfortable with. She suggested that women come with oversized T-shirts and men should bring athletic trunks. Krabill said Live Oak Ranch prefers that individuals come with a member of the opposite sex.

"We like to have a balance to help make people comfortable," Krabill said.

The resort has been offering nudists a secure atmosphere for their lifestyle during the past 16 years. Nudists can either visit when it is convenient for them, or can reside within the resort.

Members of the resort have the choice of various living accommodations - camping, recreational vehicles, cabins, and mobile homes for residents. Live Oak has more than 700 members with 18 who live at the resort.

Nunez lives in the mobile home park, and a Please see **Live Oak**, Page 4

## Hard Helmet 'turns the stomach' well

By **Chris S. Cobb**  
THE BATTALION

"Betty" Helmet Rock Interscope Records

On the cover of this recording is a young woman smiling and holding a basket of flowers, looking much like Julie Andrews in "The Sound of Music." But, what you will find on the CD is anything but "Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do." A ton of feathers weigh as much as a ton of bricks, and despite the pretty pictures on the cover and sleeve, the music is just as heavy.

Gene Simmons, bassist for the band Kiss, said on a recent *Headbanger's Ball*, "I like Helmet - anything that turns the stomach."

The music is also not for the weak at heart. It would not be a wise choice to put on as background music for a candlelight dinner, but it certainly is mood music. In other words, if you're in a bad mood, this is a good choice for that extra push over the edge.

"Betty" picks up where Helmet's last album "Meantime" - which included the MTV nominated video "Unsung" on their video awards - leaves off.

Some chances are taken on this record. For instance, the song "Biscuits for Smut," is a little funky. "Beautiful Love," a remake of the 1959 jazz standard by pianist Bill Evans, starts off as a bonafide jazz-guitar song, but soon turns into heavy metal/noise/jazz. "The Silver Hawaiian" is almost danceable.

The best track, "Milquetoast," also appears on "The Crow" soundtrack. But after awhile, the ear grows tired of listening to the same kind of crunch-guitar/droning vocals/drum-driven which continue to the end of the CD.

This release is not a great introduction into this kind of music. But, if Helmet's last release, "Meantime," was your cup of tea, "Betty" is a good refill.

# A brilliant darkness

## Two soundtracks shine from the shadows of brooding films

By **Chris S. Cobb**  
THE BATTALION

"The Crow Soundtrack" Various Artists Rock Atlantic Records - Interscope Records

Two things are needed to properly "experience" this recording: the lights off and the music loud. The bands will do the rest - provide the atmosphere.

The film and soundtrack have been out for a short while, but due to the mysterious circumstances that occurred during the filming, including the dark subject matter and the death of actor Brandon Lee, both have turned into cult classics.

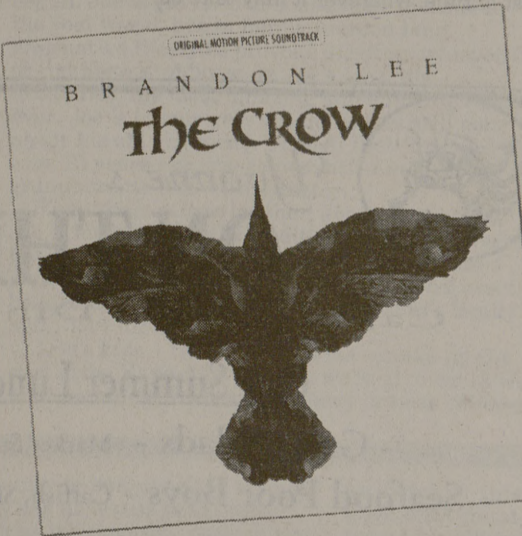
The Cure begins the album with "Burn," a good song reminiscent of U2. "Burn" sounds like it would fit nicely with the tunes from *Achtung Baby* CD. The song begins and ends with a "wash" of noise and starts the recording off strongly.

Just as the Cure's song ends, the Machines of Loving Grace's "Golgotha Tenement Blues" begins. The lyrics echo through the eardrums as the guitar squeals and crunches through the dance-type tune. Don't expect it to be played on top 40 radio, but it is a good track.

The next offering is the much radio-played "Big Empty" by the Stone Temple Pilots. The drummer must be good friends with the engineer because the drums are too loud in the mix. Despite this, the track is solid and is more than what critics have called "just a throw away from their 'Core' sessions."

Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails) and his computer-processed guitar sound follows. Although good, "Dead Souls" does not stand up to those on the *Pretty Hate Machine* and *Broken Albums*.

After this tune, the recording seems to skid. Songs by Rage Against the Machine, the Violent Femmes, and the Rollins Band are disappointing.



Although, the Femmes are still a punk band playing with no distortion.

The album picks itself back up with Helmet's "Milktoast." The song on the soundtrack is mixed slightly differently than the one appearing on their new album, *Betty*. Page Hamilton and the rest of Helmet slug their way to Pantera's "The Badge." This track might be a bit of surprise to Pantera fans.

The song is a cover of an Oregon-based band, Poison Idea. The lead singer of Pantera, Phil Anselmo, suggested the song because the band had never recorded a cover tune. The song would not fit on their latest album, *Far Beyond Driven*, but then again, Pantera doesn't usually play punk.

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By **William Harrison**  
THE BATTALION

"Blade Runner" Vangelis New Age Atlantic Records

"Quite an experience living in fear, isn't it? That's what it is to be a slave."  
- Batty  
"Blade Runner"

Twelve years ago, Ridley Scott's intriguing science fiction film "Blade Runner" was released, but unfortunately something equally majestic was not: New age musician Vangelis' soundtrack.

Because of production politics, Vangelis did not release his moving score at the same time as the film. The studio cut and spliced the release without regard to director Scott's wishes, eventually leading to a falling out with Scott. This clash caused Vangelis to block the release of the film's music in 1982.

However, demand remained for the soundtrack, and at long last the music may stand alone, freed from the film that inspired it.

Vangelis' haunting score begins as the film did, with music echoing amid a huge, ominous Los Angeles cityscape of the future. The music mirrors the city: dim and raining, gigantic towers looming as numerous aircraft dart through space like fireflies. This depressed panorama serves as a fitting dark backdrop for a tale pitting an artificial human slave uprising against "Blade Runner" policemen.

The soundtrack runs without pause as Vangelis' score mixes the futuristic feel of soft synthesizers with an occasional dose of raspy saxophone reality.

"Main Titles" begins the score with a sound bite of Harrison Ford, acting as Deckard, a reluctant Blade Runner. The sound drifts through the tracks



as an endless dream, occasionally stirred by the edge of the saxophone.

Vangelis' "Love Theme" again features the saxophone which creates a sultry mood as the synthesizers take a back seat. This track is probably one of the most familiar and most recognizable from the film.

The surprise comes from "One More Kiss, Dear," a song with a Big Band sound, reminiscent of World War II songs. The antiquated monophonic tenor of Don Percival, the trombone and restrained percussion tie in well with the film's emphasis on the substance of memories.

Despite the Big Band variation, the soundtrack is a singular piece from a single man's interpretation of a film's mood. There is little to satisfy eager

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