

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000

Quirky comedy show to blast into A&M

By Jeremy Keddie
THE BATTALION

"Mystery Science Theater 3000" will be bringing Adam West, star of the former Batman series, to the silver screen of Rudder Theater Wednesday at 7:30 and 9:45 p.m. in "Zombie Nightmare," a 1986 Hollywood bust about a murdered teenager revived by a voodoo queen and slaughters his punk-teaser assailants.

"Mystery Science Theater 3000" began in August 1988 as a way to make fun of movies which never quite made it or just plain sucked. The characters are seen in the front row of a movie theater during movies, and comment and crack on the films usually horrible dialogue.

The actually format of the program involves a human named Mike Nelson, and robots Tom Servo and Crow, who have been stranded in outer space by scientists to monitor the effects of cheesy movies on the human species.

The show is in the midst of a nationwide college tour, in which college students can see the world premiere of the show's version of "Zombie Nightmare."

The show debuted in September 1988 on a Minneapolis-St. Paul UHF station.

"Mystery Science Theater 3000" now appears on Comedy Central, an all-comedy network. However TCA Cable does not carry Comedy Central and Wednesday's showing will

be the only chance for Texas A&M students to see the premiere.

Since its beginnings, "Mystery Science Theater 3000" has been nominated for the Cable Ace Award for best comedy series, and was nominated for an Emmy Award for outstanding individual achievement in writing for a variety or music program.

Partly responsible for these awards are Paul Chaplin and Mary Jo Pehl, two of "Mystery Science Theater 3000's" writers.

Chaplin was performing stand-up comedy, and the producer of "Mystery Science Theater 3000" was in attendance at one of his shows. Chaplin said his performance was terrible.

"He admired my fortitude to go on even though the audience kept leaving," Chaplin said. "By the end of the third act there was no one left."

Chaplin landed himself a job as a writer for "Mystery Science Theater 3000," with Best Brains Inc., the corporation which produces the show.

Helping Chaplin with the scripts is Mary Jo Pehl. She had also been doing stand up

comedy and in February of 1992 began writing for the show.

With the talent of these two writers and several others, Best Brains Inc. saves 24 movies a year from reaching their graves early.

"The worst movies you want to do can be surprisingly expensive," he said.

The show has featured such cheesy movies as "Super Agent Super Dragon" (1966), "Warrior of the Lost World" (1984) and "I Accuse My Parents" (1945).

Pehl and Chaplin said writing for the movies begin several months before they are televised.

All of the writers sit in and view the movies together, while taking down all comments made during the airing.

Sometimes it's too much humor to handle, Pehl said.

"I have big bouts about spewing Diet Coke through my nose," Pehl said.

But things can become too dry



Host Mike Nelson and robots Tom Servo and Crow.

to handle after viewing each movie about six times.

"If you're having a bad day where nothing is funny, there other people in the room who will pick up the slack," Pehl said.

Admission to Wednesday "Mystery Science Theater 3000" will be free with a student ID card.

Black Crowes' 'America' starts strong, ends weak

By Drew Diener
THE BATTALION

The Black Crowes
"America"
American Recordings
** 1/2 (out of five)

The Black Crowes' latest musical companion may not shake your money maker.

"America," the Georgia group's third LP, is an interesting follow-up to "Shake Your Money Maker" (1990) and "Southern Harmony and Musical Companion" (1992).

On the album's opening tracks, lead singer Chris Robinson's scratchy voice adds spice to an already impressive conglomeration of instrumentation. Robinson's lyrics deal with traditional themes like bad love, deception, depression and confusion.

While these themes may not be original, the sound of the music combined with Robinson's irresistible crooning make each of the album's first five songs a pleasurable listen.

The album's first track, "Gone," possesses a sampling of the various instrumentation and sound techniques featured throughout the album. A funky percussion sound reminiscent of War's "Lowrider" envelops the listener immediately. The percussion soon combines with the guitar, bass, drums and Robinson's voice, thus striking a potent crescendo.

Robinson sings "Save me from this season's dead air / Take me blind, naked, and scared."

Obviously depressed, the music offers a strange juxtaposition of moods. The music, eliciting a feeling of ease, dominates words that appear to represent the antithesis of such feelings. Even the manner in which Robinson sings "Gone" boldly contrasts the mood of the lyrics.

The upbeat feel of the Black Crowes are back with "America."



Williams' storytelling moves 'Loose'

By Erin Hill
THE BATTALION

Victoria Williams
"Loose"
Mammoth Records
*** (out of five)

Remember your elementary school music teacher? The one that played the guitar and autoharp and sang "Puff the Magic Dragon?"

Well, Victoria Williams, a singer/songwriter from Louisiana, seems just like one, minus the autoharp. Her songs are lessons and her voice the teacher.

Even when her songs cover the usual topics, namely love, relationships and family, she narrates with incredible expression.

At times Williams could pass for a country crooner, as on "Happy to Have Known Pappy." But "Love" and "When We Sing Together" are pure folk tunes, the kind we haven't heard since the days of Peter, Paul and Mary.

She can sing ballads too, like "Nature's Way," a duet with Dave Pirner of Soul Asylum, and "Psalms," a slow song with a spiritual message.

Just when you're convinced she is just another female folk singer-Joni Mitchell wannabe, she breaks out with her rendition of "What a Wonderful World." Considering she's a young Caucasian woman she does a formidable impression of Louie Armstrong.

Williams refuses to be categorized and enjoys teasing her listeners with a wide variety of styles, genres and subjects. Her talent for writing songs with such different styles may be due to her experience in writing for a wide variety of performers.

Pearl Jam, Soul Asylum, the Waterboys, Michelle Shocked and The Jayhawks are just some of the bands that have performed her songs.

Those artists and many more released "Sweet Relief" last year, a collection of Williams songs as a fundraiser for emergency health care for musicians, a problem Williams understands since she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

"It was the greatest gift," said Williams in a press release. "Hearing those artists sing my songs sounded really wonderful — and maybe that gave me a new-found confidence towards doing another record."

That record is "Loose" and confi-



Victoria Williams' poetic style of music is featured on "Loose."

dent is a good way to describe it.

From the laughter in her voice to the photos of her playing around with her dog on the album cover, it's apparent that Williams is having fun doing what she knows she is good at.

At times her voice lacks maturity and it sounds like a little girl with a squeaky voice, but it is a little girl with an adorable smile and charming personality who makes you happy anyway.

But Williams' best songs are the ones where she sings like a grown woman. Two of these are the folk rock

ballads "You R Loved" and "Hitchhiker's Smile" with R.E.M.'s Peter Buck and Mike Mills.

When Williams is at her best the album moves along, demonstrating a remarkable range of styles and emotions. When she isn't, well, she's still a good songwriter.

This is Williams' third album and it sounds like her most honest one yet. Williams said "I know that I had a better time making it."

With any luck, her fans will have as much fun listening.

Stones still rockin' after all these years

By Belinda Blancarte
THE BATTALION

It's difficult to imagine our fathers stirring up enough energy to rock-n-roll like a teenager, but one group of middle-aged men never seems to slow down.

The Rolling Stones rocked the Alamodome in San Antonio Saturday for a sold-out crowd of about 50,000 fans.

With an elaborate eight-story high stage that included a fire-breathing cobra overhead, the Stones kicked off the show with "Not Fade Away."

Along with new material from "Voodoo Lounge," such as "I Go Wild," Mick Jagger and the boys played their memorable hit "Satisfaction" as the crowd went wild.

Other "Voodoo Lounge" selections included "You Got Me Rocking," where the audience joined in with their screams of "Hey! Hey!"

To slow things down a bit, the

Rolling Stones played the "Some Girls" album's hits "Beast of Burden" and the rarely played country-sounding "Far Away Eyes," with the screen showing them in black and white.

Keith Richards sang "The Worst" from "Voodoo Lounge," in addition to the 1970s hit "Happy" from "Exile on Main Street."

And as another favorite, "Honky Tonk Woman," brought people to their feet, the screen pictured past film stars

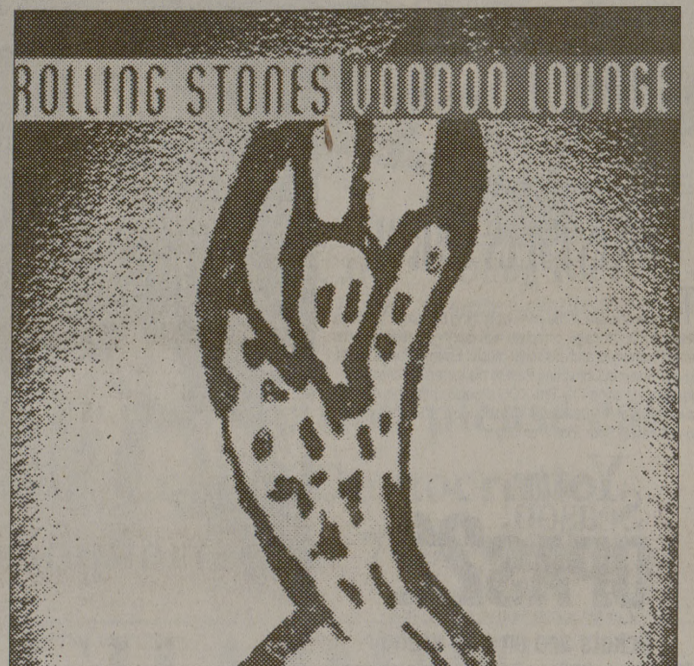
such as Shirley Temple, and other famous women like Queen Elizabeth II.

But the best performance of all began when huge inflatable images of such things as a skeleton, a goat, Elvis and the Virgin Mary swayed in the background as Jagger, decked out in sunglasses and a fuzzy, leopard-printed top hat, sang the ever-popular words, "Please allow me to introduce myself . . ." from the hit song "Sympathy for the Devil."

And Jagger, now in his mid-50s, wouldn't disappoint the crowd without doing some of his trademark dancing of sudden jerks and turns.

Although the Stones would leave without playing such favorites as "Ruby Tuesday" or "Paint It Black," the band returned for an encore performance of "Jumpin' Jack Flash."

And after fireworks lit up the stage, Charlie Watts, Ron Wood, Richards and Jagger walked to the front of the stage arm in arm and took a bow.



The Rolling Stones are currently on tour supporting their hit "Voodoo Lounge" album.