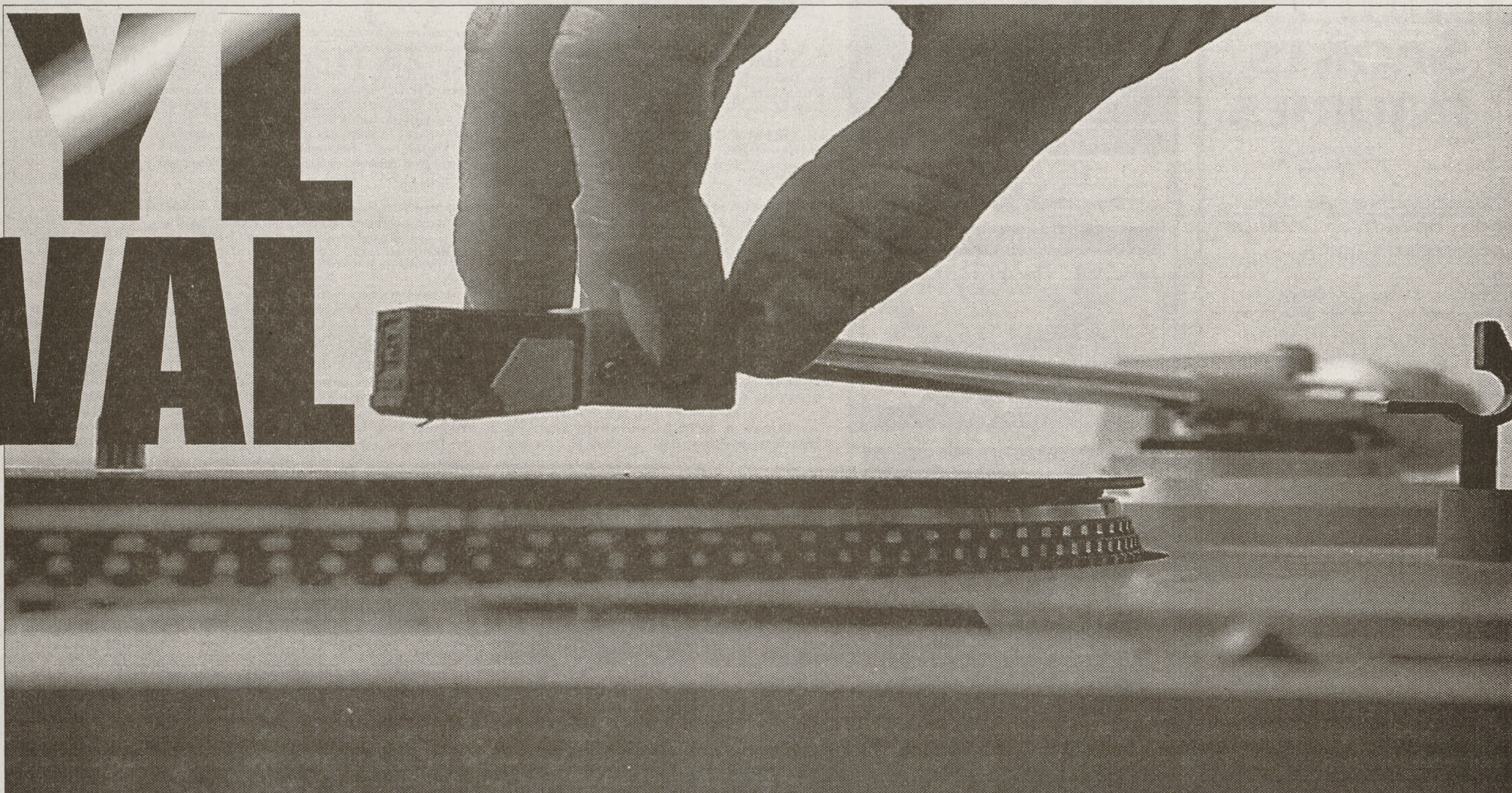


VINYL RENEWAL



Stew Milne / THE BATTALION

With help from mainstream bands such as Pearl Jam, vinyl records are making a comeback.

Vinyl records slip back into the mainstream

By Jay Knioum
THE BATTALION

Vinyl records — memories of the black, grooved shiny surface and the colorful art displayed on the huge slipcase. Long before magnets read the sound from magnetic tape, long before lasers reflected from the first compact disc, the world had come to love the scratchy sound of the vinyl LP.

For some, that love never died. Even with the rise of cassettes and CDs, some people still held onto their black vinyl. Some bands, hoping for acknowledgement, still recorded on it.

No longer the exclusive dominion of punk rock bands and dance club disc jockeys, some popular artists have turned back to the medium.

Pearl Jam's "Vitalogy," may be the best example of vinyl's return. The album was released on vinyl two weeks before the CD release. It became the first vinyl album to make the Billboard album charts since CDs took over as the most popular medium.

Kathleen Araskog, of Epic Records' College Marketing Dept., said the band sold 66,000 vinyl copies of "Vitalogy," and the number is still climbing. But now that the album is on CD, the numbers will begin to decline.

"It's probably going to taper off," Araskog said. "The only people who buy the vinyl are collectors or die hard Pearl Jam fans, but that will be a while." Sandy McNees, assistant manager of Camelot

Music in Post Oak Mall, said consumer requests for vinyl have been strong, and that every record Camelot stocked has been sold. She said Camelot sold about 16 vinyl copies of "Vitalogy" before the home office ran out of them.

Chris Penn, assistant manager of Marooned Records, and a Texas A&M graduate, said vinyl copies of "Vitalogy" and Pearl Jam's earlier album, "Vs.," were bought up quickly. Marooned has sold over a hundred copies of vinyl Pearl Jam albums.

Todd Traylor, manager of Marooned records and a Texas A&M graduate, said CD technology doesn't produce the ideal sound for some bands.

"(Vinyl sound) is a little rougher sound, which isn't necessarily worse," Traylor said. "I hear someone say they want the 'crystal clear sound of Nirvana.' Come on, it's all feedback, it's all thrown through 10 distortion pedals before you get it. It's not that crystal clear a sound."

Traylor said he could understand the need for clarity when dealing with acoustic instruments.

"If it was a classical guitarist, or maybe an opera singer, I can understand people wanting the clear sound," he said. "It's nice not to have tape hiss from a cassette. It's nice not to have the needle sound when the needle goes down," Traylor said.

Traylor said people like CDs not because of superior sound quality, but because they are easy to use. "It's being able to go from song to song without having to fast forward or pick up the needle that makes the CD so much better in people's

minds," he said.

The appeal of vinyl rests with its age, Traylor said. Some people like the medium simply because it's been around longer, and they grew up with the sound, he said.

Although many hot bands are only recently hopping on the vinyl bandwagon, some bands, like Green Day, never hopped off.

The band released 7-inch singles and developed a cult following for seven years before Warner Bros. took notice of them.

Other bands like Firehose and Fugazi have been putting their sound on vinyl since their first release. "Those bands never gave up on it," Traylor said. "It's coming back around."

Matthew Shaw, a senior journalism major who plays a number of string instruments and frequently records his music, said many artists appreciate recording on vinyl for technical reasons.

He said vinyl plays smoother because it records in a continuous spiral. CDs, however, develop a barely audible pulse in the music during recording. Shaw said that while most listeners won't hear this pulse, it annoys the artist.

"The big comeback is in natural sound — acoustic," Shaw said. "Everybody's playing on MTV Unplugged, making acoustic albums."

Shaw said the Beastie Boys record on vinyl so they can experiment with feedback.

"CDs, because the way they compress it, cut out a lot of the feedback that you can get," he said.

A&M students are kings of the road at new Northgate bar

By Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

A dream of opening a bar is about to come true for four A&M students. King of the Roadhouse, a new bar on Northgate, is scheduled to open Friday.

The four co-owners are all current or former Texas A&M students: Ray Prewitt, a 1992 graduate; his brother Todd Prewitt, a senior agricultural economics major; Thom Bartkowski, a senior civil engineering major; and his wife Jen Bartkowski, a 1992 graduate.

When The Bullseye closed down, Todd Prewitt said the location was too good to pass up.

"One of the things that will make this place different is that it's four college students that own it," Todd said. "We're opening it because our house got too small for parties."

Thom Bartkowski said the Roadhouse will start brewing their own beer by March. There will always be a light beer, a dark beer and a different type brewed each month, he said.

"We're going to be really small scale — and if people request a certain beer, there's a good chance that it will get brewed in the next couple of weeks," Thom said.

Thom said he believes he can balance going to college and owning a bar.

"I guess I'm not going to get a lot of sleep," Thom said. "I don't think it will be too tough. I've been in school for so long that I don't screw around as much as I did."

Ray Prewitt said that obtaining permission to brew their own beer was quite an accomplishment.

"People don't realize that we have to do the same paperwork as Budweiser does when they open up a plant," Ray said.

Todd Prewitt said they named the bar after Roger Miller's song, "King of the Road."

"We thought King of the Road was really cocky," Todd said. "We like the Roadhouse because we used to throw a lot of parties at our house, which was pretty much the only house on the road. Now we just went commercial."

Eventually, the bar will serve food, Todd said.

The menu will start off small and expand once the owners discover people's preferences, he said.

"I hope to have the best burger in town," he said.

The big deck behind the bar should contribute to a relaxed atmosphere, Todd said.

"We're the only place on Northgate with such a big back deck," he said. "We have as much square footage outside as we do inside."

Todd said good relations with customers are going to be a top priority. "Without customers, it doesn't exist," Todd said. "We just want to make everyone happy."

"We want a place you're not afraid to bring your parents to during the day but you'd have second thoughts about bringing them here at night."

— Ray Prewitt

Co-owner of The King of the Roadhouse

Todd said he is looking forward to seeing how crowds react to the new bar.

"On Northgate, people stereotype different bars. I'm kind of curious to see what they'll stereotype ours as."

Ray Prewitt said he also wants the bar to have a versatile purpose.

"We want a place you're not afraid to bring your parents to during the day but you'd have second thoughts about bringing them here at night," he said.



Roger Hsieh / THE BATTALION

The King of the Roadhouse bar is set to open this weekend.

Boyz II Men, Ace of Base, Michael Bolton win big at American Music Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The soulful vocal group Boyz II Men won three honors at Monday night's 22nd annual American Music Awards on the strength of their sensuous single "I'll Make Love to You."

The Swedish pop group Ace of Base, balladeer Michael Bolton and country stalwart Reba McEntire claimed two trophies each, as awards were given in 22 categories representing a broad range of music.

Boyz II Men was named favorite

group in the soul-rhythm and blues category and the single "I'll Make Love to You" collected trophies for favorite pop-rock and soul-R&B singles.

Mariah Carey was one of two leading nominees going into the night but was awarded just one trophy — favorite pop-rock female artist.

Bolton, who had won four previous AMA trophies, topped Boyz II Men and Carey in the competition for favorite adult contemporary artist and was named favorite pop-rock male artist.

Ace of Base, which has a hit with "The Sign," scored favorite pop-rock group and new artist.

Snoop Doggy Dogg won his first American Music Award, for favorite rap-hop artist.

The Award of Merit went to the artist formerly known as Prince, recognizing "outstanding contributions to the musical entertainment of the American public."

The closest the show came to any controversy was when the artist formerly

known as Prince gyrated with a scantily clad dancer during one number.

The producers avoided trouble by cutting during key moments to several long camera shots taken from the back of the auditorium.

In the country categories, McEntire won favorite country female artist and her "Read My Mind" won the country album honor. She now has a dozen career American Music Awards.

Garth Brooks won the favorite male country artist award, boosting his ca-

reer total to seven.

Vince Gill won the favorite country single award for "Whenever You Come Around."

Alabama was named favorite country group for the 13th straight year, bringing its career total to 18.

Nirvana, which lost leader singer Kurt Cobain in a suicide last year, was named favorite artist in the heavy metal-hard rock category, besting Pearl Jam and Stone Temple Pilots. The remaining members of Nirvana did not attend.