

Sincola reaches Pixie-dom with debut album



From Sincola's album cover

By Kyle Littlefield
THE BATTALION

Sincola
What the Nothinghead Said
Caroline Records
★★ 1/2 (out of five)

It seems to be a trend in music for artists to try to keep a good thing going. When Kurt Cobain died, there were bands like The Offspring and Bush waiting in the wings to be the next love interest of alternative music fans. The trend continues. It seems that when the Pixies disbanded, and front man Black Francis/Frank Black went on to try to be Beach Boy Brian Wilson, a large pair of shoes were left to

be filled. Enter Sincola's first full-length release, *What the Nothinghead Said*. The Austin band's debut sounds incredibly like the Pixies. Drummer Terry Lord says in a press release, "We're probably influenced by a lot of bands but, you know, you swallow something and by the time it comes out the other end..." However, Sincola's music merits a description other than "excrement." For instance, songs like "Sedate Me," with lines like, "Sedate me... I'll be your wish / your kewpie doll bitch," show that Sincola can provide infectious, sing-song hooks that fueled the Pixies to underground success. And then there is the similarity of all the guitars. Two guitarists to be exact, create the Pixie-esque wall of guitars sound. Pixies lead guitarist Joey Santiago may find himself asking for a cut of the royalties on songs like "Bitch" which relies on a catchy, unconventional guitar line echoing the Pixies' song "Alex Eiffel." While the majority of the Pixies songs were sang by Black Francis, Sincola features a female vocalist. With a seemingly bottomless grab-bag of shock tactics, lead vocalist Rebecca Cannon shouts, rants and scares. She sounds like a more-aggressive Kim Deal, but can turn on a strange, cute charm. In today's world of estrogen-driven music, Sincola

will have an audience. But the resemblance doesn't stop there. Many of Sincola's songs experiment with structures that reside somewhere on the frontiers that the Pixies tamed, or rather untamed, in the 1980s. It's easy to imagine the recording session for "Hint of the Titty": "OK, I want you to whisper some meaningless, cool stuff over this guitar part right here, and then we will step on our distortion pedals here, and it will rock." And it does, indeed, rock. *What the Nothinghead Said* benefits from its odd sense of dynamics, which makes for interesting music. It all comes down to whether wearing your influences on sleeve is a good thing to do in the music world. The label of "imitators" will probably plague the band. That's too bad because the ideas on *Nothinghead* are fresh and inventive in a time where alternative bands are churning out thinly veiled Top-40 hits. Too bad Sincola's musicians wear their influences a little too

Rap, TV stars explore silver screen in 'Boys'

By Nick Georgandis
THE BATTALION

Bad Boys
Starring: Martin Lawrence, Will Smith and Tea Leoni
Directed by: Michael Bay
Playing at: Schulman 6
Rated: R
Rating: ★★★ 1/2 (out of five)

The scene is tense. A convenience store owner, thinking good cops Marcus Garnett (Martin Lawrence) and Mike Lowery (Will Smith) are going to rob his store, has pulled a large pistol on them. In turn, the two draw three guns of their own on him and Lowery instructs him on what to do next. "Back up, lay the gun on the counter... and get me a pack of Tropical Fruit Bubblicious." "Yeah," Garnett deadpans, "and throw in a pack of Skittles." Such is the theme of *Bad Boys*, which sets up stand-up comedian-turned-television star Lawrence and rapper-turned-television star Smith as action stars in a fast-paced thriller about two Miami vice cops looking for a lost shipment of heroin and the killer of a friendly prostitute. The movie starts off with the two driving in scenic Miami in Lowery's extremely stylish Porsche. Lowery is from a rich family and feels he has to prove himself to the rest of the force by working that much harder. Garnett is the exact opposite of Lowery, a family man with three small children. To him, being a police officer is about earning a living. He knows that he has to be good to keep food on the table for his very middle-class family. The first few minutes of the movie show that there is a very natural rapport between Smith and Lawrence. They trade quick, biting barbs with each other until they are confronted by two carjackers who decide Lowery's Porsche is too nice to pass up on. With a punch from Lowery and a swift kick to

the groin by Garnett, the comedy becomes an action-comedy, moving quickly with substantial wit. The new case for the pair is solving a late-night, high-tech robbery at the very police station where they work. Someone has stolen approximately \$180 million worth of heroin from an earlier bust. The police suspect an inside job, and thus, the case must be solved before the press turns the station upside down. Along the way to solving the crime, the two meet Julie (Tea Leoni) the sole witness to the killing of a prostitute who knew about the break-in. Julie manages to escape the bad guys, and calls Lowery. Trouble is, Lowery isn't around to field the call and Garnett is forced to fill in his partner's shoes. Because Julie refuses to deal with any police help besides Lowery, he and Garnett have to swap lives until the case is solved, providing many laughs as Garnett trips around in Lowery's bachelor pad and Lowery adapts to Garnett's zoo-esque home life. Both actors are properly muscled for the fighting and gunfire scenes of the movie, although Lawrence's lack of height, especially compared to the 6-foot, 3-inch Smith, makes him appear silly at times. But the real surprise is Lawrence's acting ability. He does exceptionally well as the married man, looking to provide for his family, yet not wanting to be upstaged by his younger, smoother partner. Smith is solid in his role, not all that different from his role on "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air." He's got plenty of money, a sharp tongue and a way with the ladies. Still, his police work scenes are good enough to believe. Leoni is the real weak link in the movie. Her lines seem forced and most of her comedic bits are not funny unless they are accompanied by retorts from Lawrence or Smith. With the probable success of this film at the box office, Smith and Lawrence could become hot commodities on the silver screen. Somewhere down the line, they'll have to make the decision between the movies and television. Which success to pick? Watcha gonna do?

'Made in England' recycles same old style

By Erin Hill
THE BATTALION

Elton John
Made in England
Rocket Records
★★ 1/2 (out of five)


Elton John is all about ballads. And sometimes he goes overboard on his latest album *Made in England*. You have to cut the man a little slack though. For starters, he used to put out incredible music. And second, he sings every last track it as if he means it with his entire being. He begs to be taken seriously, even though his music makes that difficult at times. It seems that John doesn't know how to be subtle. Perhaps it is his choice of mediums - piano and orchestra - that causes his album to sound like one big finale, or maybe the Michael Bolton syndrome has hit the U.K. Either way, the size of his songs can get a little repetitive. REO Speedwagon is probably going to ask him to make an appearance any day now, because it sounds like John is trying to recreate the huge Speedwagon sound of its tenure as the top slow-song band of the '80s. And yet, there is a nice mix of personal and public in his choice of song subjects. His concern is both for his heart and the state of the world. The influence of touring partner Billy Joel rears its head in "Made in England," a song about being indebted to American rock'n'roll. "I was made in England... I had Little Richard / and that black piano... and the boy from 'Tupelo," belts John. In "Please," he discusses commitment in a most unique way: "Please let me grow old with you... tied to the same track / the two of us look back / at oncoming trains ahead." Sometimes John's instrumentation doesn't fit the message of the songs - sad songs sound cheery, and vice versa. While this can be disconcert-

ing, it also serves to showcase John's message there is both a silver lining and a dark cloud of the human experience. References to his homeland are plentiful peering in "Made in England," "Belfast," and "Tude." It sounds like he is trying to return to roots. "Belfast," in particular, is a beautiful well-crafted and sweet in its delivery. The London Sessions orchestra is a pleasant addition to the song, and the violin, pipes and accordion at the end of the song provide the local Ireland. The listener leaves the song with the feeling of helpless regret - highly appropriate concerning the problems in Ireland. He shows rare restraint on this track by not overdoing it on the emotions. Too bad it's the track least likely to be released as a single. John shows his sensitive side through the lyrics in "Man," written by his lyricist Bernie Taupin. Even though he is a talented songwriter, Taupin gets caught up in his own style. In several songs, he seems to be following a formula called "Writing a top 40 pop song." He feeds John lots of lines about embracing times, no matter what the result. Call Elton John stupid, call him brave. He keeps coming back for more. Actually, call him a recycler, for that's what he is. He just isn't creating anything terribly new this album. Die-hard fans will beg for the old Elton to show his big boots, bizarre glasses and all. He can do better. No one expects a radical change in style, because John's trademark piano playing is one of the best things about him, but a change-up would be appreciated at times.



Elton John

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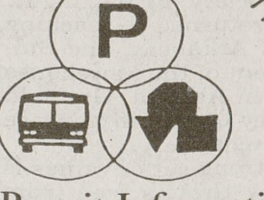
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