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Aggielife

Village of the Damned

Carpenter's latest attempt fails

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION

Village of the Damned
Starring: Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley and Linda Kozlowski
Directed by: John Carpenter
Rated: R
Showing at: Hollywood 16
★★ 1/2 (out of five)

Given John Carpenter's recent movie flops, *Village of the Damned* might have been an appropriate name for the longtime horror-film maker's hometown. But with his last film, *In the Mouth of Madness*, and his latest attempt, Carpenter has tried to revamp his career with little success.

Unfortunately, his creativity needs revamping before he can salvage his career.

Village is little more than *Children of the Corn* with a little more window dressing. It's the tired tale of a small town under siege by children with mystical powers.

The film revolves around Midwich, Calif., a speed bump of a coastal town where nothing happens. But that changes when a strange force engulfs the town and makes several of the town's women pregnant.

The plot puts along without a twist or turn as the children grow up and begin showing abnormal abilities. They can read your thoughts, and they have a nasty streak when it comes to protecting their own.

As the film winds on, it's revealed that the children, to no one's surprise, may not be from this world. The whole tempest in a teapot moves towards an inevitable confrontation between the children and one of the townsfolk, played by Christopher Reeve (*Superman*). Big surprise again.

Village of the Damned relies more on Carpenter's trademark shock treatment and special effects than on a good plot, and the movie suffers because of it. It is a plot as familiar as the back of your hand.

The refreshing twists present in *Madness*, whose plot kept you on the edge of your seat, are absent in this film. *Village* only keeps you interested to see when you'll next be scared out of your seat by some tired horror movie cliché (such as someone jumping into a doorway right as the music reaches a climax — ho hum).

The plot even mars the efforts of an intriguing cast, which brings



The abnormal children in Carpenter's latest film can read minds and are protective of their own.

back a mob of almost-forgotten film stars. Reeve returns to mainstream film audiences as Doug Chaffee, the small town doctor and father of one of the children. Kirstie Alley stars as Dr. Sarah Verner, a government scientist sent to monitor the children, and Linda Kozlowski (*Crocodile Dundee*) returns to the big screen as Jill McGowan, the local school principal. Even Mark Hamill gets in the act as the town preacher.

Village of the Damned only proves that, perhaps, any rumors of Carpenter's career resurrection are greatly exaggerated.

St. Johnny cooks up unique alternative sound

By Kyle Littlefield
THE BATTALION

St. Johnny
Let It Come Down
DGC Records
★★★ (out of five)

The soup in the alternative music kitchen is boiling over. Seems the boys from St. Johnny have thrown in a little bit of everything that was lying around and let it cook too long. The result is a warped exercise in 70s pop culture.

Let It Come Down is an eclectic assembly of songs resembling the likes of Sonic Youth, Beck, Teenage Fanclub, Pavement, the Velvet Underground and the music on a "Scoobie Doo" soundtrack. By meshing all of these influences together, St. Johnny comes up with a sound you've probably never heard before. The second full-length release from this Hartford, Conn. band contains all of the fuzz and saccharin of an AM radio station at three in the morning.

The album opens with "Scuba Diving," a track accompanied with the obligatory sounds of water bubbling, and a catchy chorus of, "Money, Money, Money / Pray to the dying radio star." St. Johnny is not above mocking itself or the music business.

Vocalist Bill Whitten sounds an awful lot like Lou Reed and Stephen Malkmus. Whitten whines but at the same time, you get the feeling that he's looking down on you in that pop star fashion.

The appeal of St. Johnny is their diverse sounds. One track will resemble the soul sounds of Motown and then the next like late 70s pop. "Hey Teenager!" would be at home on the flip-side of a Partridge Family record with its "groovy" guitars and funky drum beat.

And St. Johnny has a unique sense of humor. "Rip Off" begins with the band members cawing like crows and fades into a sea of distorted harmonicas and guitars.

St. Johnny has made an art out of acting the fool, but does it seriously. The childish whistling that dominates "Scuba Diving" is hard to swallow, but gives the song a sort of early-Rolling Stones quality. The Stones were known for taking something simple and creating as whole song around it.

With its lively orchestration, "Bluebird" could have been a Motown hit. Whitten sings, "Is a bluebird really blue? / Does he know what it's like to be a fool? / Break his lover's heart / To only always fall apart."

The lyrics are open for interpretation, but that's

how St. Johnny planned it.

Lead guitarist Jim Roberto said in a press release, "I'm not a big fan of happy-go-lucky songs, but these aren't the other extreme either. They're more 'That's the way it is'..."

Whitten likens *Let It Come Down*'s hodgepodge of tracks to a Quentin Tarantino movie "without the picture." "If the album were a movie the overall color would be cyanotic blue, and it would be filled with car wrecks, fights and broken hearted gas-station attendants. But there's no plot. Unless failure, loss and hopefully redemption is a plot," says Whitten.

Although the listener's experience may not be the same as Whitten's, he or she will definitely have an experience.

Whether it is your roommate throwing your stereo down the stairs after you have listened to St. Johnny's habit-forming melodies for the tenth time in a row, or your puzzled stare when you hear the odd brilliance of St. Johnny's arrangements, you will either love or hate this CD. It just depends on your favorite flavor of alternative soup.

At times, St. Johnny can be a bit over the top, but it is still refreshing to hear old music revamped into something new.



St. Johnny

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

NOW president finds humor in Gingrich's threat to women's rights

EAST MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — What's Newt Gingrich to Patricia Ireland? "The best membership recruiter NOW ever had," she says.

The National Organization for Women president lambasted the conservative Republican with humor in a speech Saturday.

On the controversy over the House speaker's mother, Kathleen Gingrich, calling Hillary Rodham Clinton a nasty name, Ireland said that word was an acronym for "being in total control, Honey."

Jokes aside, Ireland said women face serious attacks from Republicans, including a plan to con-



Newt Gingrich

vert some welfare programs for poor women and children into block grants to states.

"We have got to take them very seriously," she said. "We've got to organize as if our lives depend on it, because they do."

Leno sweetens deal in Portland's children's hospital fund raiser

PORTRLAND, Ore. (AP) — Jay Leno took his show on the road and ended up on the local morning news.

"The Tonight Show" host popped into the KGW-TV studio Saturday, chatted with the anchor and delivered a cup of coffee to the weatherman. The station was holding an auction to raise money for a children's hospital. Leno, in town to tape man-on-the-street segments, sweetened the deal with tickets and a backstage pass to his show.

Ted Nugent defends gun enthusiasts against recent negative backlash

JACKSON, Mich. (AP) — Ted Nugent thinks the government should leave his fellow gun enthusiasts alone.

"Law-abiding gun owners have done nothing wrong," said the rocker, who lives outside this southern Michigan city.

The 46-year-old Nugent, best known for the hits "Journey to the Center of the Mind," "Baby Please Don't Go" and "Cat Scratch Fever," said he supports the Michigan Militia, which was scrutinized after reports that suspects in the Oklahoma City bombing attended its meetings.

He called the Oklahoma blast "a demonic, cowardly, murderous crime." But he said people in the militia are not like that.

"I shoot with these people, I have been to target practice with them. I find them professional, hard-working people," Nugent said.

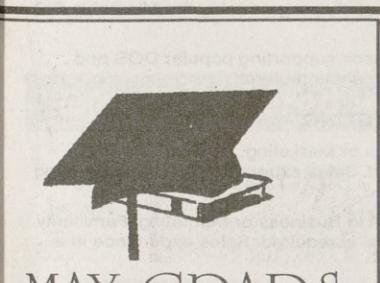
ADVANCED SERVICES ATS TUTORING GROUP

	MON. 5/1	TUE. 5/2	WED. 5/3	THU. 5/4	FRI. 5/5	SAT. 5/6	SUN. 5/7	MON. 5/8	TUE. 5/9
1 TO 4				MATH 308 Final Review -D-		MATH 308 Final Review -A-	MATH 308 Final Review -B-		
4 TO 7		PHYS 219 Final Review ONE CLASS ONLY	MATH 308 Final Review -C-	MEEN 212 CH. 6	MEEN 212 CH. 2-3	MEEN 212 CH. 4-5	MEEN 212 Prac. Exams	MATH 308 Final Review	
7 TO 10	PHYS 208 CH. 36-38	PHYS 208 CH. 23-28	PHYS 208 CH. 29-34	PHYS 208 Prac. Exams	MATH 251/253 CH. 11-12	MATH 251/253 CH. 12-13	MATH 251/253 CH. 14	MEEN 213 Final Review -B-	MATH 308 Final Review LAST CLASS
10 TO 1	MATH 308 Final Review -A-	MATH 308 Final Review -B-	MEEN 212 CH. 5 and Appen. A	MATH 308 Final Review -D-			MEEN 213 Final Review -A-	PHYS 208 Final Review LAST CLASS	

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