

AGGIELIFE

Gaines steps from behind ♀'s purple shadow with soulful *Closer Than Close*

By Rob Clark
THE BATTALION

In the ever-changing world of soul music, most artists seem to fall into a trap.

The rap trap, that is. With hip hop's increasing popularity, most soul singers seem to think their style must be funkified to create any kind of commotion.

Not Rosie Gaines. Gaines first caught the nation's attention as a singer and keyboardist for the New Power Generation, the backing band for the artist formerly known as Prince.

Gaines almost stole the show from Prince on hits like "Diamonds and Pearls," "Cream" and "Gett Off."

But Gaines has stepped out from behind the diminutive shadow of His Purple Pompousness with her debut solo album, *Closer Than Close*.

Not since Aretha Franklin's heyday has there been a voice so thunderous roaming

ALBUM REVIEW

Rosie Gaines
Closer Than Close
Motown Records
★★★ (out of five)



the soul music industry. Gaines combines her influences - Franklin, Chaka Khan, Al Green and Prince - with her own style of blues, jazz and R&B.

And the end result is an impressive album with soulful ballads

dominated by Gaines' powerful voice. Gaines even provides a link from the past to the present with two of the most influential men in music.

The late Marvin Gaye's voice is sampled in "I Want U," and Prince turns the tables on Gaines by singing backup on "My Tender Heart," as well as writing two of the songs on the album.

Perhaps the main problem with the album is one that should be expected from a debut album. The lyrics in most cases are simple, save the two Prince-penned songs and the two Bob Marley remakes.

Gaines also uses the tired "Baby, I'm sorry" speeches that groups like Boyz II Men have run into the ground.

Other slips are Gaines' feeble attempts at a socially-conscious vibe on "Concrete Jungle" and "Get the Ghetto Out of Your Mind."

But Prince comes to the rescue with "My Tender Heart." The song, written by His Royal Weirdness, is a sure-fire hit with a touching tale of love lost. Prince's backing vocals, along with those of gospel group The Steeles, mix perfectly with Gaines' to provide the smoothest of flows.

Most ambitious is "December 25th," in which Gaines ponders the peace of Christmas Day in a year of turmoil.

"What about freedom, happiness and love?" Gaines asks. "I'm looking for a better place - One day of silence in a war?"

With her ballads, Gaines sticks to what works by sticking to her roots. No caravan of hip hop dancers will be accompanying her performances. Just a piano and her voice.

In looking back at recent R&B debuts, Gaines' inexperience is similar to Vanessa Williams' first album, *The Right Stuff*. But as Williams has flourished, so shall Gaines.

A voice like Gaines' simply cannot be ignored.



All-day festival is a waste of time, money and sweat

Tickets for the fifth-annual Lollapalooza festival went on sale last weekend. A word of warning for fans who are considering braving this festival for the first time: don't be blinded by MTV's glorified coverage of Lollapalooza. It's not all that it's cracked up to be.

Here in Texas, all-day concerts are about as good of an idea as asking someone to hold a blowtorch to your head. Both activities can have similar effects.

Aside from the searing heat, the entry fee alone is enough to drive the masses of poor college students away. The ticket price has averaged at or above \$30 for the last four years. Prices wouldn't be that bad if there were not so many added expenses.

No one warns the innocent concert-goer of how much money will be spent just to stay alive. Fans can expect to pay at least \$5 for a piece of pizza and \$2 for a cup - more like a shot - of water. Of course, considering the show runs an average of eight hours, more than a cup of water might be needed.

Then there's the infamous Lollapalooza midway, a French Market of sorts where peddlers sell everything from clothes to political bumper stickers, all of which the

AMY UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



sell and your friends will convince you that you cannot live without.

And they're right. A 2-foot tall "Cat in the Hat" hat made out of wool and hemp is just what you need when faced with a day of 100-degree weather and a huge crowd of thieves.

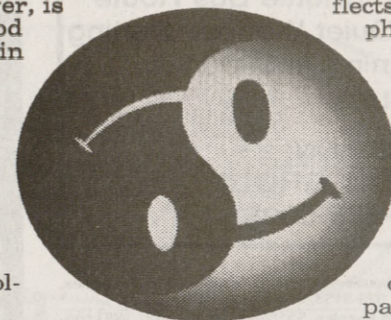
The worst part of Lollapalooza, however, is the bands. Granted, there are always good bands on the lineup, but they are mixed in with second-rate bands that 99 percent of the audience couldn't care less about.

After hours of suffering through mediocre music to hear the one band you've been waiting for, it only plays for a limited amount of time and without any stage props or settings that the band would have if it was touring on its own.

In short, the good bands, competing for time, aren't allowed to shine by virtue of Lollapalooza's nature.

Lollapalooza proves what other festivals have been discovering lately - packaged festivals just aren't a good idea. As an occasional novelty, they work. Woodstock was great. The first Lollapalooza was an underground milestone - a Generation X Woodstock, if you will. The second one was even pretty good. But since then, this show has become a dead horse.

Lollapaloozer



The public is losing interest as the show gets worse. In 1992, as many as 50,000 people attended the second Lollapalooza in Houston. And why not, with a lineup including Pearl Jam, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Soundgarden? Last year, at a different venue, Houston attendance barely topped 20,000, which is still a good turnout but reflects the public's fading interest in this once-phenomenal road show.

Enough people have gone to a Lollapalooza by now to realize that it's just not all that it's cracked up to be.

Maybe festival organizer Perry Farrell should put the show on hiatus for a few years. Then, after festival-goers have a financial and physical break, the show would be welcomed back.

We should think long and hard before we march down to Ticketmaster and shell out over \$30 for a ticket to this year's Lollapalooza festival. We should consider all the better - and less painful - concerts we could go to with that money. We could buy tickets to two or three good club shows. That money could fund an entire weekend of bar-hopping and clubbing here in good ol' College Station.

Whatever we do, we should not waste our money on this over-hyped, over-priced festival.

WEEKEND PREVIEW

TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA

Duo brings comic style to Palace Theatre

By Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

Trout Fishing in America will bring its comical music to Bryan Saturday with a children's performance at 4 p.m. and an adult performance at 8 p.m. at the Palace Theatre.

Trout Fishing is known for suddenly bursting into spontaneous joke-telling and even juggling.

Ezra Idlet, the band's guitarist and vocalist, said the group's style is a blend of folk, rock, blues and some reggae.

"It seems that these days, people try to segment music more," Idlet said. "We're sort of general practitioners of music. It rocks quite a bit."

The blending of styles is because of differences between Idlet and bass player Keith Grimwood, he said.

Idlet said their personalities are almost completely opposite from each other.

"He's the guy who follows the rules," Idlet said. "I'm the flakier one. If there's a rule, there's a way around it."

The duo has been together for 19 years, and Idlet said their differences help them to stick together.

"We get along pretty well," he said. "If we were both like me, we wouldn't have any money. I don't think there's a lot of jealousy between us."

When it comes to their music, Idlet said Grimwood thinks of lyrics first, while he thinks of music.

"We both arrive at the same place," he said. "We write very well together. We are bigger

than each one of us is individually."

Most of the lyrics which come out of their brainstorming focus on personal experiences, he said.

"It's who we are, what we are and how things affect us," Idlet said. "We turn the ordinary into something extraordinary and special. It's the day to day things that miracles occur in."

Even though the band plays hundreds of shows a year from Alaska to Florida, Idlet said he and Grimwood take off three or four days each week to be home with their families.

"It's not all about money," he said. "A quality life is more important. The most important part is to do something you love."

They found what they loved when the duo did a show for a teacher who asked them to perform for her students in 1977.

Because the band enjoyed performing for children so much, Idlet said it decided to continue performing the shows and eventually began to write music specifically for kids.

"Their responses were so honest and quick," Idlet said. "They're very excitable and enthusiastic."

Idlet said the band's humor also relates to adults.

"Adults tend to let down their guard and become more childlike," Idlet said. You leave our shows with a great feeling. You focus on the experience."

A genuine relationship with its audience is high on Trout Fishing's agenda, Idlet said.

"We really direct ourselves toward the audience," he said. "We're not selling a product. We're real people instead of stars."



Trout Fishing

THURSDAY

Desperadoz, a tejano band, is performing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Freudian Slip, A&M's improvisational comedy group, is playing at The Dixie Theatre.

Local blues musician **Bobby Hall** is playing at Northgate Cafe.

Uninvited Guest, a cover band from Waco, is playing at The Tap.

FRIDAY

Arabian Knights, a local arabic band, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.



Gals Panic, "Texas' most alternative ska band," is playing at Northgate Cafe. **Fountain Head** is also playing.

Killer Bees, a reggae band, is playing at The Dixie Theatre.

New West is at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Peeping Tom, a local cover band with a few original songs, is playing at The Tap.

Texas Twisters, a classic rock band, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

SATURDAY

Black Pearl, a rock band, is playing with Billy White Trio at The Dixie Theatre.

James Hinkle, a rhythm and blues band, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Ken Ryan and Crossover, a country band, is playing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Slippery Fish, a cover band from Houston, is playing at The Tap.

The Jim Talbot Blues Band, a blues band from Austin, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

Trout Fishing In America, a folk band, is performing a children show at 4 p.m. and an adult show at 8 p.m. at the Palace Theatre. See related story.

Veil of Veronica, a local alternative band, is playing at Northgate Cafe.



Pocahontas, Disney's 33rd animated movie, opens Friday at Hollywood 16 and across the nation. As the first Disney feature to ever be based on a real-life figure, the film also marks the 400th anniversary of Pocahontas' birth.