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**APOLLO 13 (PG)** On Two Screens  
10:25 1:25 4:25 7:25 10:30  
10:55 1:55 4:55 7:55 10:55

**POCAHONTAS (G)** On Two Screens  
10:45 1:05 3:25 6:30 8:40 11:00  
11:25 1:35 3:45 6:00 8:20 10:30

**BATMAN FOREVER (PG-13)** On Two Screens  
10:45 1:45 4:35 7:40 10:20  
10:10 1:25 4:10 7:15 10:00 12:45

**FIRST KNIGHT (PG-13)** On Two Screens  
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:25 12:30  
10:00 1:00 4:00 7:30 10:40

**SPECIES (R)** On Two Screens  
10:15 1:05 4:05 6:30 9:10 11:50  
11:00 1:45 4:10 7:05 9:45 12:15

**BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY (PG-13)**  
11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00 11:15

**ONCE WERE WARRIORS (R)**  
10:30 1:00 3:25 7:00 9:35 12:00

**DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE (R)**  
11:10 1:45 4:30 7:20 10:10

**FORGET PARIS (PG-13)**  
2:20 4:50 7:55

**BAD BOYS (R)**  
11:25 10:30

**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING (PG)**  
11:15 1:40 4:00 12:10

**CONGO (PG-13)**  
11:05 1:30 4:00 6:45 9:20

● SNEAK PREVIEW 7/12 - NINE MONTHS 7 & 8 p.m.

( ) LATE SHOWS FRIDAY & SATURDAY ONLY  
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**BIGGER THAN LIFE**

Nothing sells like superheroes

Filmmakers and psychologists alike should direct their eyes to Batman, for he is not just a stud in spandex anymore. Over the last six years, he's proven not only to be a mere money-maker, but he is also a metaphor for modern-day zen.

If people don't believe the holy hype surrounding this superhero, they should just look at the facts. The three *Batman* movies have made a combined \$143.1 million from their opening weekends, which gives them three of the four most successful opening weekends in movie history.

The most recent *Batman* movie had the most successful opening weekend ever, outsting *Jurassic Park* from the throne.

*Batman Forever's* formula would seem to have all the key ingredients for a blockbuster: an acclaimed director, beloved actors and actresses, killer special effects and an enormous budget. But there's more.

People love movies like *Batman* and *Jurassic Park* because they are the perfect mix of reality and the ultimate fantasy.

What person wouldn't love to live the life of



AMY UPTMOR  
COLUMNIST

Batman for a day? It's everything that childhood dreams are made of - a seemingly average Joe who works a somewhat normal job and lives in a "normal" world.

But at night, the average Joe flies without planes, drives up the sides of buildings, beats the bad guys, becomes everyone's hero and captures the heart of the most beautiful girl in town.

Could anyone ask for more? Watching *Batman Forever* is the ultimate act of catharsis. Shakespeare would have been proud. In less than two hours, viewers can live a fantastic, yet impossible playboy life in a world that will never exist. It's an escape, and it makes us all feel better when we leave the theater.

People who want to experience heroic again this summer should go see *Apollo 13*, - starring none other than Tom Hanks, the man who everyone wanted to believe was a superhero in *Forrest Gump*. Sure, it's a true story, but how many people will ever be astronauts? It's about as likely as becoming Batman. Astronauts are our real-life superheroes.

Audiences can take picks on a superhero movie this summer, for there's a plethora -

*Judge Dredd* and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* are two more to add to the list.

Obviously, *Batman Forever* director Joel Schumacher and *Apollo 13* director Ron Howard aren't the only two directors that have bought into this winning formula. These smart directors prove that a movie doesn't have to answer any of life's questions or solve any great social issues to make people feel better. After all, in the real world, the less we are reminded of reality, the happier we are.

Reality bites, and we all know it. So why pay \$6 to be tortured by lives worse than our own when we could live the life of an invincible person? Superhero movies are like virtual reality, only more accessible.



**Merchant returns with solo success**

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

Ever since Natalie Merchant announced her plans to go solo, her "maniac" fans have been eagerly awaiting her solo debut.

Merchant ended her career as lead singer of 10,000 Maniacs after 10 years of producing some of the most unique alternative folk music of the '80s. The band's music featured Merchant's unusual mezzo-soprano voice



Natalie Merchant

and thoughtful lyrics.

In the eyes of many fans, Natalie Merchant was 10,000 Maniacs.

*Tigerlily*, Merchant's debut solo release, is in many ways a complete departure from 10,000 Maniacs. Musically, Merchant has moved to a much looser, less intense sound, with the instrumentation being almost entirely acoustic throughout the album. The sound is simple, unlike the barrage of horns, strings and accordions that could customarily be found on almost any 10,000 Maniacs album.

But some things never change with Merchant. Themes of sadness, bitterness and growing up dominate her lyrics as they always have.

Merchant's voice, coupled with some weak lyrics, often lacks fierce passion and conviction.

When Merchant's voice is up to par, often her band's fluffy sound can not live up to her power.

Merchant and the band sound flat and lifeless on the album's opening track, "San Andreas Fault," a song about the destruction of California by earthquakes. Even when the song's most powerful lyrics are delivered - "O promised land / O wicked ground / Build a dream / Tear it down" - both Merchant and her backing music sound unmoved.

There are some shining moments on this album where Merchant's new, lighter sound is successful. "Where I Go," with guitar and lyrics reminiscent of Nancy Griffith and Sarah McLachlan, is a sweet song about going to the river to escape from the troubles of life.

The highlight of this album is "Cowboy Romance." It is a charming song that ties Merchant's songwriting style and her voice. Complete with beautiful backing violin and piano - played by Merchant - this is a haunting tale of love between a cowboy and a fool, in which the fool

Album Review  
**Natalie Merchant**  
*Tigerlily*  
Elektra Records  
\*\*\* (out of five)

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"Would you spare the innocent ones / Would you take me with you? / Can you love the land / And love me too?" Of course, the boy rides away, leaving her alone.

This unusual theme probably stems from Merchant's fascination with the Old West that manifested itself in her 10,000 Maniacs songs "Gold Rush Brides" and "Dust Bowl Days."

Other notably good songs are "River," song about the overexposure of the life and death of River Phoenix, and "Carnival," first release from the album, which compares the streets of New York to a series circus side shows.

*Tigerlily* is by no means as good as Merchant's work with 10,000 Maniacs, but a noble first effort. She does not show the full range of her talent, but she will no doubt satisfy her "maniac" fans with this beautiful debut.

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For more information, attend one of these meetings in 154 Bizzell Hall West:

Wednesday, July 5 at 11:00 a.m.  
Thursday, July 6 at 3:00 p.m.

Study Abroad Program 167 Bizzell Hall West 845-0569

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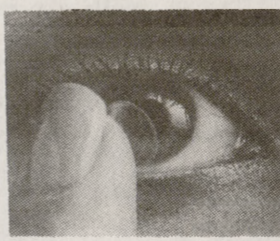
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