

AGGIELIFE

Fanclub, start your engines

Band kicks off tour to promote Grand Prix

By Kyle Littlefield
THE BATTALION

With its latest album, *Grand Prix*, just hitting the record stores, Teenage Fanclub is revving up for its tour with Weezer which starts this Friday.

By embodying the melodic highs of the Beatles, the jangle of the Byrds and the naivete and vulnerability of obscure '70s band, Big Star, Teenage Fanclub has gained fans for four years who have seen past the popularity of Nirvana or Pearl Jam.

The band, which hails from Scotland, surfaced on the British and American independent scenes with 1990's *Catholic Education*. The album's first single "Everything Flows" appeared on the indie top 15, and the album hit No. 3 on the indie charts.

In 1991, the band's quick start got it signed to DGC, and its album *Bandwagonesque* landed them a performance on "Saturday Night Live" and the respect of Spin magazine, which called the record "the best record white people have made this year."

In 1993, the band spent eight months recording its third album "Thirteen" which received mixed reviews, and obscured the band's image in America.

For *Grand Prix* and the coming tour, the band has enlisted a veteran producer and replaced its original drummer.

In a telephone interview before boarding a plane to the states, Raymond McGinley, guitarist for Teenage Fanclub, took some time to talk about the band.

Because it can either attract or scare away fans, McGinley said he sometimes has to explain how the band got its name.

"We just wanted to get something really stupid sounding that would eventually become associated with the band," McGinley said. "It doesn't mean anything."

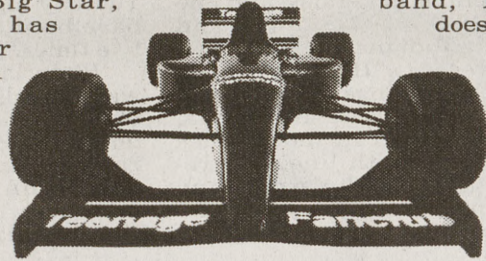
Teenage Fanclub has a history of poking fun at itself. In 1991 the band recorded Madonna's "Like a Virgin," and the title of the album *Bandwagonesque* is a slight to the music business.

The title of the new album *Grand Prix* is a contradiction that fits with this history.

"We thought that the sort of irony of the imagery of formula-one car racing was exactly the opposite of everything that we're like," McGinley said.

Recording *Grand Prix*, which was produced by veteran producer David Bianco, who has produced Mick Jagger, Tom Petty and Frank Black, was a virtually stress-free process, McGinley said.

"It was the experience that he (Bianco) brought that meant that we could just relax, because we knew it would sound good," McGinley said. "There wouldn't be any problems on any technical or stupid level, so we could just



Raymond McGinley and Teenage Fanclub start touring this Friday with Weezer.

get along with recording the songs."

When Teenage Fanclub released *Bandwagonesque*, critics accused them of not only being influenced by bands such as Big Star, but of copying those bands as well.

"I think we just made an album naively, which is the way we always try to approach things," McGinley said.

The band members even met the man behind Big Star, Alex Chilton, who told them that he was accused of similar musical crimes.

"He (Chilton) said to us, 'You know, I don't think you ripped us off at all. People used to say I ripped off the Kinks

See TEENAGE FANCLUB, Page 4

Vertical Horizon has the love but lacks the lyrics

ALBUM REVIEW
Vertical Horizon
Running On Ice
Rhythmic Records
★★ (out of five)

By Libe Goad
THE BATTALION

Keith Kane and Matthew Scannell could write a book about love.

The simple, four-letter word appears in almost every song on Vertical Horizon's new 14-song release, *Running On Ice*.

The acoustic duo that found a following while touring with crowd-pleaser Jackopiere, enhances its simplistic love-struck songs with the addition of bass guitars and drums.

From the welcomed skills of talented guest artists springs a musically diverse album.

Carter Beauford of the Dave Matthews Band joins the journey and intensifies the band's soft acoustic sounds with his steady percussion.

Beauford's well-seasoned drumming escalates the happy-go-luckiness of "Famous" and "Candyman."

The upbeat rhythms in both songs add a welcome layer of happy emotions over the duo's straightforward lyrics about the L-word. "Candyman" especially contrasts the soft sound of the band's first album, *Back and There Again*.

Jack O'Neill and Cary Pierce of Jackopiere also appeared on the album in "Reprise," a short and inventive hidden track. The choral effect of harmonizing voices gives "Reprise" a twist of darkness, creating a hope that Vertical Horizon will experiment more with future songs.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Shepherd drops \$2.8 million on new villa

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actress Cybill Shepherd can moonlight as a wine taster, car collector or even sharpshooter in her new \$2.8 million home.

Shepherd recently purchased a Mediterranean-style villa on 1.5 acres in Encino, 17 miles northwest of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday.

The 9,000-square-foot home boasts a panoramic mountain view, six bedrooms, a tennis court, basement wine cellar, a courtyard that can accommodate more than 10 cars and a pistol-shooting range.

The house was recently leased to actor Burt Reynolds for \$20,000 a month.

Shepherd, who found television stardom on the comedy hit "Moonlighting," stars in the CBS sitcom "Cybill."

Therapy helps O'Connor change

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sinead O'Connor feels so different.

After three years of therapy, the Irish singer is back on the music scene, sporting a pixie-style haircut and a new outlook on life.

O'Connor, 28, is performing this summer with other acts as part of the Lollapalooza '95 tour.

It marks her first U.S. appearance since the then-bald singer was booed at a Bob Dylan tribute concert three years ago, after tearing up a photograph of Pope John Paul II on NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

O'Connor is now singing about her struggles as a victim of child abuse.

"I was in a bad way as a result of what was going on within my family, so I had to take a few years to recover from that basically," she said.

"The thing that saved me was therapy."

Flutist sees show's cancellation as a sign

WANTAGH, N.Y. (AP) — A violent thunderstorm halted The Chieftains' first concert of their U.S. tour to promote *The Long Black Veil*.

"It's the first time in 32

years we've ever missed a concert," the Celtic band's spokesman, Charles Comer, said Sunday.

The Chieftains were in the middle of their fifth song at an outdoor theater Saturday night on Long Island when the storm hit. Officials quickly sent home the 9,000 fans.

Flutist Matt Malloy took the thunder and lightning with good humor.

"You see, God was listening to me with my flute," Malloy said. "It was a sign of heavenly approval."

The Chieftains continue their tour on Tuesday at Great Woods in Mansfield, Mass.

Evert never went easy on Bush's tennis

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — Former President George Bush may have a mean swing, but how's his backhand?

He got to demonstrate Sunday at the International Tennis Hall of Fame, after he presented the hall's newest member, Chris Evert, with her enshrinement certificate.

Bush told a packed stadium that he and Evert have played tennis at the White House, Camp David and his home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

He said his sometime partner always admonished him: "Bend your knees. Stay behind me. Get up to the net."

"As president, people would give me long putts," Bush said. "When I'd throw up a lousy lob, people would give me back a kinder, gentler return. Chris Evert never understood that."

Bush and Evert later moved to a practice court where they defeated her husband, former Olympic skier Andy Mill, and his partner, Pam Shriver.

Queen Latifah survives carjacking

NEW YORK (AP) — Two gunmen commandeered rapper Queen Latifah's car in Harlem, critically injuring a friend, police said.

Queen Latifah, who stars on Fox television's "Living Single," and a third person in the car were not hurt, but one of the carjackers shot and critically wounded 22-year-old Sean Moon, said police spokesman Valerie St. Rose.

Movie ads can deceive

"MOVE OVER BATMAN,"
IT'S THE 'EXCELLENT,'
'SUSPENSEFUL,' 'ACTION-
PACKED,' 'FEEL-GOOD
MOVIE OF THE SUMMER'
THAT 'THE WHOLE FAMILY
CAN ENJOY.'"



MICHAEL LANDAUER
AGGIELIFE
EDITOR

Too often, movie advertisements sound like the one above and could make people think the movie must be the next *Forrest Gump*. But it could also be the next *Ishtar* — we just can't tell until we go see it. Or can we?

Soundbites, brief exclamations created by yanking small phrases from other people's work, are the cornerstone of modern movie advertising.

No one wants to read an entire movie review these days, so the nice advertising executives read them for us and tell us what they say by pulling out one or two key words. This service is unnecessary and often deceptive.

There is nothing wrong with pulling quotes from reviews to sell a product as long as the quote is reprinted in all capital letters with as many exclamation marks as possible. Otherwise, readers get confused and think the reviewer is not too excited about the movie. Of course, maybe they aren't.

The way the ads are now presented makes potential audiences think reviewers are really excited about the movie when the opposite could be true.

Someone could calmly sit down and write, "Movie X was a huge disappointment, but the original score was excellent and deserves an Academy Award." This shows up in *Movie X's* ads as, "EXCELLENT ... DESERVES AN ACADEMY AWARD!!!"

Most reviewers find something nice to say about any movie. Although a review may be entirely negative, it could get the proverbial "thumbs up."

For example, Siskel and Ebert gave *Under Siege II* "two thumbs up" but didn't say much positive about the film. They merely said viewers in the mood for senseless violence who could overlook weak acting and direction might enjoy the film. But the ads won't say all that.

To get the whole story, moviegoers need to go about things the old-fashioned way — they need to read and think for themselves.

Too often we are guilty of only seeing films in terms of stars and thumbs, but words can say so much more.

A good reviewer anticipates what the reader wants to know. They don't just write in anticipation of having a few words chosen as a soundbite. Reviewers go into detail about the aspects of a film that make it good or bad.

"AN ACTION-PACKED SUSPENSE THRILLER!"

Reviewers do more than tell you that a movie "sizzles" — they tell exactly why it sizzles and if that sizzle is enough to make it worth seeing.

No one can look at stars or thumbs and say, "Well, it looks like another solid performance by Keanu Reeves" — especially since Reeves has been in several entertaining films without ever turning out a solid performance.

Audiences should be careful with what they read, and they need to be neurotically doubtful about soundbites. Taking the time to read about a movie's strengths and weaknesses before casting judgment on a film will help audiences choose films they will enjoy.

Reviews actually say something. Soundbites try to, but what exactly is a sleeper? It means nothing to be the "feel-good" anything.

To find out what writers meant by these terms, audiences have to look beyond the soundbite. Just because a movie is "action-packed" does not mean that it is entertaining.

We should at least act like we can think for ourselves without soundbites — that would be a performance worth two thumbs up.

VIP RESEARCH

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VIP Research is seeking couples to participate in a 19 month research study of an investigational herpes vaccine. To be considered for study participation, one partner must have genital herpes while the other partner must not carry the virus which cause genital or oral herpes (cold sores/fever blisters). \$500 will be paid to each qualified couple that enroll and complete this study.

VIP Research, Inc.
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