

The Great Pumpkin



Corgan and co. tackle massive Mellon Collie

By Rob Clark
THE BATTALION

The dangers of becoming a prolific artist in the indie-alternative rat race became a harsh reality for Billy Corgan in 1993. Lifting his voice to the heavens was *Siamese Dream*, an astounding album that pigeonholed the Smashing Pumpkins as the primary art doom band in post-Nirvana rockdom.

But while Corgan wore his heart on his sleeve in his deeply personal lyrics, he ended up slipping in his own entrails. Charges of band turmoil ran rampant, and Corgan's control freakish behavior propelled his sincere intentions into puddles of pretentiousness.

Corgan now goes from *Siamese Dream* to his own personal fairy tale, *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*. The album is a monstrous accomplishment, with extremes racing from blood-curdling death rock to glorious ballads.

Of course, releasing a double album with 28 songs will probably further the band's pretentious glow achieved by refusing to play for fans who throw shoes. But *Mellon Collie* is ambitious, indeed, and a testament to Corgan's creative output.

From the CD booklet cover to the inside art, it appears the band is trying to land the Pumpkin spaceship in the middle of Aesop's Fables, a world of magic and wonder, anger and darkness.

With such a vast array of songs, trying to provide any kind of cohesiveness is futile. Where *Siamese Dream* and *Gish* traveled down a coordinated road, *Mellon Collie* is all over the place, never stopping to rest before switching gears completely.

Taking a jab at critics despite its cryptic title is "F--k you (an ode to no one)." Corgan growls "And you're mistaken, it's you that's faking," and "Destroy the mind, destroy the body, but you cannot destroy the heart."

Ironically, *Mellon Collie's* proudest moment is without Corgan's lyrics at all. The title track, a

ALBUM REVIEW
Smashing Pumpkins
Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness
Virgin Records
★★★ 1/2 (out of five)

stunningly beautiful piano ensemble with squealing keyboards, may seem insignificant next to the usual Pumpkin noise, but is an intriguing start to the album.

A curious first single is "Bullet With Butterfly Wings," one of *Mellon Collie's* hardest songs. Corgan's raging vocals tear into the angst-driven lyrics, "Despite all my rage, I am still just a rat in a cage."

At times, Corgan's attempts at love lyrics fall as flat as a Mariah Carey tune. Well, that might be stretching it a bit, but "Thirty-three's" lines of "I know I'll make it, love can last forever" sound dangerously like the Lionel Richie school of devastatingly sappy ballads.

Equalling "Thirty-three's" cheese factor is "Beautiful," with the Burt Bacharach-ish lyrics "You're beautiful as the sun."

But ultimately, whatever sound comes from the Pumpkins is intriguing. This album will not provide the same chart success as *Siamese Dream* because of its sheer magnitude, but that's never been the point for Corgan anyway.

Mellon Collie shows that perhaps Corgan isn't taking himself so seriously, allowing his undeniable talent and skill to answer even the most cynical critics.

Service fraternity stays true to history with growing work force

Amy Protas
THE BATTALION

In 1962, the Dean of Students said there was only one way he would allow a chapter of Alpha Phi Omega A&M. His stipulation was that the service fraternity "constantly strive to be the best chapter in the nation." This has become the motto memorized by all members of APO, a coed service fraternity.

Casey Conner, APO president and a finance graduate student, said the fraternities to fulfill the dean's expectations. "On and off, we are the largest chapter in the nation," Conner said. "UT currently has the largest chapter. Even with less members, we are able to do as much."

Throughout the year, the fraternity works on service projects, including the Special Olympics every spring.

Sylvia Johnson, a pledge trainer for APO and a sophomore community health major, said she was hesitant to go to the Special Olympics last year but it turned into an experience she will never forget. She held the tape at the finish line of a race.

"It's so touching just to watch these people because they struggle and they work so hard," Johnson said. "I really like that feeling of just helping the slightest bit."

Jessica Walters, vice president of projects and a senior political science major, said her favorite project is Meals on Wheels, a program that delivers food to elderly people confined to their homes.

"I love older people," Walters said. "A lot of them live alone, and we might be the only visitor of the day. We really get to know them, and they look forward to seeing us."

The fraternity also participates in Elder Aid, where it replaces roofs for elderly people who cannot afford it. Conner said they replaced a roof for an elderly woman who was sleeping in plastic to stay dry in her house.

Karl Burns, a sophomore economics major and APO pledge trainer, said Elder Aid is the type of project that shows how necessary an organization like APO is.

"There's nothing quite like the feelings you get when you drive the last nail into the new roof of a house [for someone] who couldn't afford it," he said.

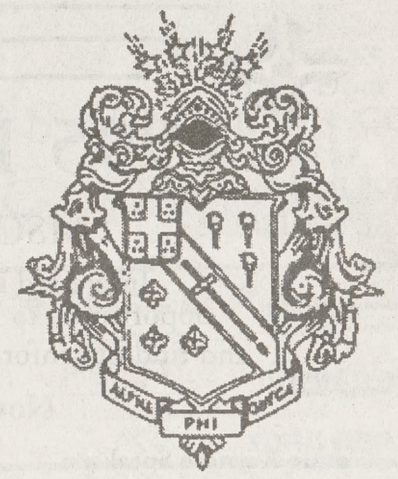
The fraternity branched out with a

new project during October when it organized "A Step Toward Awareness," a collaboration with AIDS Services of Brazos Valley to educate the community about the AIDS virus.

Jennifer Schmidt, AIDS Awareness project chair for APO and a senior political science major, said the new project made an impact on her about the need for AIDS education in the community.

"It taught me a lot about the people in the Brazos Valley and their responses to AIDS," Schmidt said. "It's a continuous effort to let people know that it's constantly going. AIDS service always continues."

Conner said in addition to APO benefiting the community, it offers members a chance to work in a big organization.



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