

is this thing on?

Singers and songwriters test the sound systems and bare their talents at Open Mike Night at 3rd Floor Cantina

BY BRENT TROYAN
 THE BATTALION

His hand shakes as he adjusts the microphone. The stage lights hum through the silence. Somewhere in the audience, a leather-backed chair scoots across the hardwood floor.

Mike Ethan Messick, a junior biology major, takes a deep breath and begins to sing.

Songwriters like Messick gather for Open Mike Night at the 3rd Floor Cantina in Bryan on Wednesdays to bare their musical talent to the crowd.

"It's a great chance to hear brand new stuff, something different," Messick said.

Roy Gene Munse, a morning disc jockey for KORA, is the official host of Open Mike Night.

Munse said he started the singer/songwriter night to give amateur entertainers a forum to play original music without the pressure that new musicians

sometimes face.

Anyone can play music at Open Mike Night, but the songs have to be original material.

Munse said the artists' material ranges from rock 'n' roll to blues to country and western, and they range in experience from seasoned veterans to first-time performers.

"Playing here takes the edge off," Munse said. "There's a real community feeling."

The community also has its own spiritual leader, though the Rev. Al Mays is not the typical holy man.

The ordained minister rides a '76 FLH Police Special Harley named "Baby Doll." His vestments are a black leather vest and a red bandanna.

"Whether it sucks or whether it's great, it's fun," Mays said. "This ain't no talent contest."

Patrick Ressler, a Texas A&M oceanography graduate student, started coming to Open Mike

Night last month.

"I feel like this is a good atmosphere," he said. "Everybody's real supportive."

The performers in the audience also offer more than applause.

Munse said many of the artists invite other regular participants to sit in on their sets.

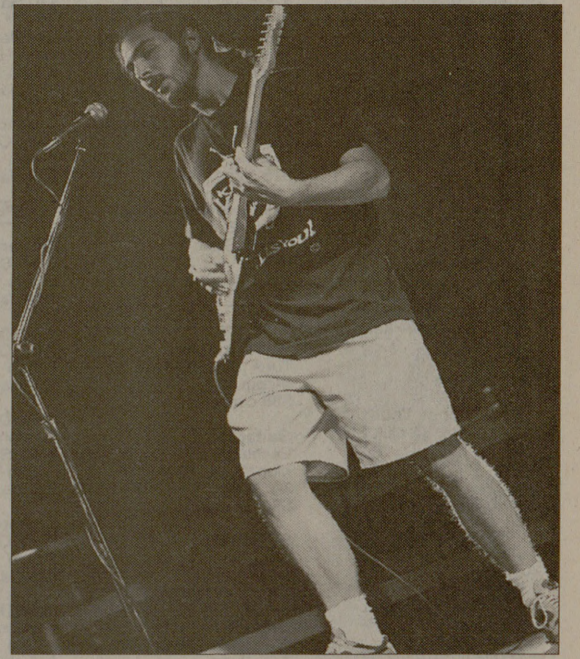
Last week, Mays improvised on his harmonica to Messick's acoustic guitar, and Mays called Munse to the stage during his set.

"Performing is not something I set out to do," Munse said, "but I like it now."

Munse said that he started writing music when he was 12 and picked up the guitar 20 years ago so he could hear what he had written.

Open Mike Night at the 3rd Floor Cantina began last November after Munse saw other singer/songwriter events in Austin and Nashville.

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Tim Moog, THE BATTALION
 Patrick Ressler plays for Open Mike Night.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Headcrash
Overdose on Tradition
 Discovery Records



Something backfired for Headcrash with *Overdose on Tradition*.

The band's anti-corporate groove rock must have seemed a promising formula for appeal and success.

Too bad the "tradition" here is that Headcrash's approach has already saturated the pop rock scene. It certainly has overdosed on the angst of the decade, and the result is a boring and uninspiring attempt at social commentary.

Overdose on Tradition is disappointing, even before the bitching begins. Headcrash's brand of repetitive distorted guitar and syncopated drumming has long been exhausted by bands like Helmet and Orange 9mm. Synthesizers are employed in a failed attempt to fuse an electronic and industrial influence with this style.

In a press release, the band's label compared Headcrash to Rage Against the Machine, which, unfortunately, is a valid judgement.

The social commentary of Headcrash's lyrics is as overdone and annoying as Rage's. The world needs, at most, one rap-slash-metal-slash-pissed-off-at-the-rich-and-powerful band at any given time, and Rage was popular first. Headcrash loses.

Headcrash's mission opens a world of irony. According to the press release, "The message is clear — corporate brainwashing is stealing our souls ... the system doesn't work."

Oh, please. This attitude, though somewhat noble, is Generation X-ish and among the bands that should have faded with grunge and teen angst fads. It sounds like someone forgot to tell Headcrash.

The band is anti-industry to the point of absurdity in songs like "Imitation of Life."

"In eternal servitude to a stable salary / Sign the dotted line and prepare for starvation / Once an individual, now a company clone."

Speaking of the "dotted line," singer Allen Wright surely considered his animosity for what he calls the "American nightmare," when his band signed to this Warner Brothers-backed label. Quite the anti-corporate move.

Next time, Headcrash should try overdosing on substance and originality. **D** - John LeBas

The Jerky Boys
The Jerky Boys 3
 Mercury / Ratchet Records



The bad boys of comedy albums are back with a vengeance, but they missed their target by a mile.

Johnny Brennan and his sidekick, Kamal, are bringing the country their third series of prank comedy in *The Jerky Boys 3*.

The album consists of 29 prank calls performed by Brennan and Kamal. In this recording, eight of the calls are incoming, advertisement response calls from unsuspecting people.

The comedic pranksters fill the album with a variety of characters ranging from a hip-hop rapper, Curly G., to a confused woman by the name of Sol Rosenberg.

The album is flat and will probably leave its audience in tears instead of guffaws.

The character of Sol Rosenberg is the album's high point.

In a call titled "Sol's Chainsaw Shock," Rosenberg receives a call from a woman responding to her chainsaw advertisement.

As Rosenberg gets up to see if her husband

has sold the chainsaw, she has a terrible accident which leaves her ankle bone protruding through the skin.

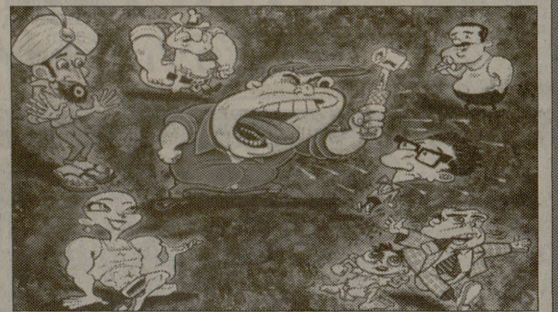
The sympathetic caller, not knowing the conversation is a phony, continually asks if Rosenberg is okay and advises her to see a doctor.

The other characters on the album are creations that should have stayed in Brennan and Kamal's imagination.

Compared to their two previous multi-platinum selling albums, the new release from The Jerky Boys is a complete waste of listening time.

The Jerky Boys must be working without a dictionary, because album No. 3 is a far cry from the meaning of funny. **F**

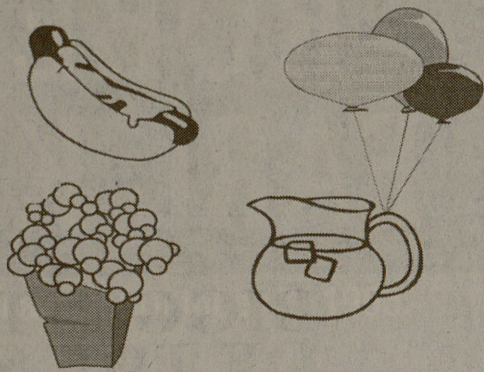
- James Francis



The Jerky Boys

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