

Beauty AND Her Beast

The mystery of Tori Amos will be confronted by a woman and her muse tonight in Rudder Auditorium.

BY LIBE GOAD
 THE BATTALION

For those not familiar with the music of Tori Amos, prepare to witness a fire-storm of a woman, who, seated side-saddle at the bench of a Bösendorfer piano, flames with raging passion at one moment and slowly smoulders the next. She is both Beauty and Beast.

And tonight the woman dubbed "the red-headed goddess" by her fans will stop at Rudder Auditorium on her 170-date Dew Drop Inn '96 tour with special guest Josh-Clayton Felt.

MSC Town Hall and PACE Concerts are responsible for bringing Amos to Texas A&M.

Liz Conejo, MSC Town Hall Vice Chair of Shows and a senior biomedical science major, said she is excited about bringing an artist with the caliber of Amos to campus.

"Everybody I have talked to — even those who are not necessarily huge fans — are excited about it because it's a unique show," Conejo said.

She said Amos' musical style sets her apart from any of the musicians Town Hall has hosted.

"It's soothing, but at the same time there is so much emotion and energy," Conejo said. "Even though it is not something you can mosh to, you can get a lot out of it."

Carrie Huebner, a Marooned Records employee and a senior business major, said Amos' lyrics transcend the lyrics of most modern rockers.

"I take that stage and that piano, and demon girls come out."

Tori Amos
 in *Tori Amos*, a book by
 Mick St. Michael

"You have to read into the music — it makes you think," Huebner said. "She has a great voice, and I can't wait to hear her play the piano."

The brutal honesty of Amos' songs about sex, spirituality and guilt made her a pioneer of outspoken women musicians in the '90s.

Her music has received frequent air-play since her debut album *Little Earthquakes* sold around two million albums worldwide. *Little Earthquakes*, *Under the Pink*, released in 1992, and her most recent album, *Boys for Pele* have produced about 12 single hits in the US, including "Caught a Lite Sneeze" and "Hey Jupiter."

Amos cites the Doors, Jimi Hendrix and gospel as major influences on her music.

Critics in London, where the artist resides, have compared Amos' music to Kate Bush and Patti Smith because of its sensuality and honesty.

In *Tori Amos*, a book by Mick St. Michael, Amos said she shrugs off these comparisons and explains that her music comes from a force within, a force that often clashes with her balanced, happy-go-lucky persona.

"I take that stage and that piano, and demon girls come out," Amos said in the book. "There are things that I refuse to deal with except through my music ... Because I don't trust humanity much, and I don't know if I trust me that much. But I trust the songs."

And her blunt lyrics are a constant reminder of the sprite that resides in Amos' heart, one that spouts truths with a mischievous grin.

In "Leather," a track from *Little Earthquakes*, Amos explores the depths of sexuality.

"Oh, God, why am I here?"

If love isn't forever

It's not the weather
 Hand me my leather."

Her childhood as a preacher's daughter also echoes throughout her music, always questioning God, yet often asking God for help. Strong religious questioning comes through in the hit song "God" from *Under the Pink*.

"God sometimes you just don't come through
 Do you need a woman to look after you ...

I gotta find why you always go when the wind blows"

Amos' past plays an ongoing role in her songwriting, whether it is showing an outright criticism of her Methodist upbringing or dealing with an event that changed her life.

After playing a show in Los Angeles in 1984, when Amos banged on pianos in smoky clubs, she gave a member of the audience a ride home. She was raped.

In *Tori Amos*, she said the sex crime changed her permanently.

She wrote a song about it titled "Me and a Gun," on *Little Earthquakes*. She played the song the day she wrote it and delivered the following message to the audience.



Tori Amos

"Rape's not something where you just go, 'Well, get over it,' or 'Believe in love and peace, my child, and it'll be all over,'" Amos said in the book. "Well, f--k you that isn't the answer."

Her answer came in 1993, after watching a character played by Geena Davis shoot a man trying to rape her in the movie *Thelma and Louise*.

She said it was then she decided she could be a victim. Since then, she has spilled her story to the public, knowing her brutal honesty meant a sacrifice of her personal life to the media.

"Almost every journalist in this town (London) has used my bathroom," she said in the book.

Conejo also said no performers that Town Hall has brought have been as particular about their surroundings as Amos. She is bringing her own caterers and guards for her dressing room and backstage.

"She is really cautious about who goes backstage," Conejo said. "I'm not sure why."

In 1996, Amos has released a third hit album and is finishing the second tour after *Boys for Pele* was released.

MOVIE REVIEWS

Sleepers
Starring: Kevin Bacon, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman and Brad Pitt
Directed by: Barry Levinson
Rated: R
Playing: at Hollywood 16

Sleepers is a film with so much star power it cannot fail. *Sleepers* not only passes, but it shines as a good example of commercial movie making.

Sleepers, based on the autobiographical book by Lorenzo Carcaterra, recounts the tale of four boys' stay in a sadistic reform school that would make Stalin envious.

The film opens with the boys' lives in a Manhattan neighborhood called Hell's Kitchen. The friends play stick ball, serve as altar boys at the local church and get into typical mischief. One of these ventures into juvenile antics accidentally results in the near-lethal injuring of a man. The four boys earn the title "sleepers" when they must serve a sentence in a reform school.

While being held in the Wilkinson Home for Boys, the boys are repeatedly beaten and raped by the school's guards. After being released from their tortured life in Wilkinson, the boys grow up desperately trying to forget their stay in the detention center.

One fateful day, two of the boys, now adults, find the cruellest of their rapists (Kevin Bacon) and kill him. The resulting murder trial which results from the shooting brings the four friends together again to avenge the crimes committed against them almost 15 years earlier.

For half of the film, *Sleepers* concentrates on the boys, while the other half concentrates on the four as adults coping with the pain of their past.

Sleepers has many good things working for it. Excellent writing, visual excitement, great directing and one of the most talented casts to be assembled this year makes *Sleepers* one of the best movies of 1996.

Barry Levinson does a great job as both director and writer. Levinson remains very loyal to the brutally honest book. Minute details, such as the character named Fat Man and mid-winter handball games, all find their way into the movie.

Levinson's biggest accomplishment in *Sleepers* is his direction. *Sleepers* stands as Levinson's most visually ambitious film to date. He successfully integrates black-and-white film into several of the most violent scenes of the picture. These scenes lend a documentary feel to the movie, reminding the viewer the movie is a true story.

Levinson deals with the talented ensemble cast effectively, balancing the characters' personalities with the skill he demonstrated in other ensemble movies such as *Diner*.

The acting in the film equals the power of the writing.

Brad Pitt plays Michael, one of the young victims, with a quiet anguish that comes through vividly in scenes with Michael's former girlfriend Carol Martinez, played by Minnie Driver.

Michael's time at Wilkinson crippled him emotionally, and Pitt demonstrates this pain with quiet intensity as he looks at Carol longing, yet too afraid to reach out to her.



Robert De Niro plays Father Bobby in *Sleepers*, based on the true story of Lorenzo Carcaterra.

The real star of the movie is Jason Patric. Patric plays the author of the book, Carcaterra, who is affectionately known as "Shakes" by his friends — in honor of Shakespeare.

This performance will propel Patric onto the fast track of movie making, who has landed the lead in *Speed 2*, replacing Keanu Reeves.

Shakes narrates the story, and Patric's voice narrates during most of the movie. Patric's quiet and hushed voice illustrates the pain Shakes suffered.

De Niro and Hoffman create strong supporting characters.

Hoffman takes an uncharacteristic career turn as a sleazy alcoholic lawyer Danny Snyder, and he does it well. De Niro plays the moral conscience of the movie, Father Bobby.

The two acting veterans lend their expertise and power to the film, but the movie devotes itself to the younger breed who propel the film forward.

Sleepers is a film that is put together well, and it proves that it is possible to make a good film from a good book.

A- *-Aaron Meier*

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