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THE BATTALION AGGIELIFE

Wednesday • January 22

music review

Elfman's music stands alone

Danny Elfman
Music for a
Darkened Theater: Film and
Television Music Vol. II
MCA Records



*** (out of five)

By JOHN LeBAS
THE BATTALION

As more and more movies and television shows rely on pop radio darlings to provide their soundtracks, the orchestral film score seems to be headed for extinction.

Danny Elfman, however, is out to prove otherwise. In *Music for a Darkened Theater*, the eccentric rocker-turned-composer turns in a collection of film and TV theme efforts that will make the listener wonder: Is the movie or its score more critical?

In Elfman's case, it is definitely the latter. The first of the two albums includes five "suites" selected from some of Elfman's recent film score efforts.

This is all stuff movie buffs have heard before, but the music takes on a vibrancy and self-sufficiency without the movies. The listener is

swept up in the mystique and heroism of *Batman Returns* and engulfed in the emotion of *Edward Scissorhands*. One advantage—the TV and VCR stay off, allowing for a more relaxing study atmosphere.

Another notable point: Elfman creates music that movie watchers do not really hear, but do listen to. He weaves his music with the movie so tightly that the two become one work of art.

For example, not many people could hum the theme music of *Edward Scissorhands* from memory, but listen to the first suite on the first disc of *Music for a Darkened Theater* and memories of the movie will flood the listener.

The real gem of the set is disc two. This album contains many unreleased pieces from movies and television commercials.

These pieces reflect Elfman's eccentricities more than those on the first disc. For those who recall Elfman's days in the Los Angeles-based band Oingo Boingo, disc two is especially tasty.

Elfman melds orchestral arrangements with screaming guitar licks in tracks from *Dead Presidents*. The original demo theme song for *Nightmare Before Christmas* doesn't sound much like what was used for the film,

but it is nonetheless entertaining to hear Elfman singing and playing all the music.

The best package on this disc, however, is "Television Odds & Ends." From music for a Nickelodeon commercial to the quirky theme of *Wee's Playhouse*, it highlights some of Elfman's more spontaneous and often overlooked efforts.

The major drawback of *Music for a Darkened Theater* is its length. Each disc is over 70 minutes, which makes it really difficult to listen to in one sitting.

But overall, *Music for a Darkened Theater* gives a wonderful representation of Elfman's work and should prove to movie and music fans alike that the traditional film score is not only alive, but doing very well.



Danny Elfman

WEST

Continued from Page 3

Roberts said finding a new focus for her work proved more difficult than she had imagined.

"I began by creating 'tall bowls' (bowls with legs) and then moved into box forms, which also had legs," Roberts said. "I wasn't satisfied with the boxes, but now realize that they were the forms that led me to the horses."

Horses have played an important role in Roberts' life. As a young girl, she used to train and ride horses. Roberts said she wanted to train

horses for a living, but sculpting eventually became her ambition.

The horses Roberts creates have elongated legs around ten inches long, although the length varies from horse to horse. The torso of the horse shortens in relation to the legs. Roberts said this disproportional effect gives the horses a feeling of lift and life.

But some viewers of her work have a different point of view on the horses' legs.

"At one of the shows I was at, a little boy asked his dad, 'Why do those horses have such long legs?'" Roberts said. "The father answered, 'I guess they have to walk through some pretty tall weeds.'"

The names Roberts gives to the horses uniquely depicts the horses as much as the colors she paints them. Roberts said names such as "Speedy," "Pony Boy" and "Phoenix" come about from the horses themselves.

"When I take them out of the kiln, I look at them and they take a life of their own with their own personalities and experiences," Roberts said.

With such devotion and insight into her own work, Roberts indicated that she lives the life of an artist. She said she enjoys her work and gives it a different insight.

"The clay leads my work and I follow," Roberts said. "As always, the clay is the greatest teacher."

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Steve Ogden



EXPERIENCE

Republican Steve Ogden.

- State Representative since 1990.
- Strong friend, support of Governor George W. Bush.
- B.S., United States Naval Academy (six varsity letters).
- M.B.A., Texas A&M University.
- Nine years of service in the U.S. Navy Submarine Force.
- Independent oil and gas producer.
- Married 23 years to Beverly Ogden (TAMU Class of '89); father of three, Michael, 22 (U.S. Naval Academy, Class of '98), Stephanie, 20 (TAMU Class of '99), and Kristen, 18 (TAMU Class of '01).



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