

music review

Powerman 5K is no musical 'superhero'



★1/2 (out of five)

BY JOHN LEBAS
THE BATTALION

Powerman 5000 has lofty dreams. "Being in a band is as close as I could get to being an actual superhero," the band's singer Spider explained. Well, it's a good thing these guys aren't protecting the free world. If the band's superhero skills matched its music, all that would be saved are some kittens from trees. Powerman 5000's latest release, *Mega! Kung Fu Radio*, is an honest but mediocre attempt at groove-based metal.

The album is probably too heavy for most tastes. That's fine — those who like Helmet and Rage Against the Machine will like the rock, and those with softer tastes will not.

On the other hand, the album has enough solid groove to go around the world twice. It inspires nearly 50 minutes of head bobbing and jumping.

The problem with Powerman 5000's groove is that it is redundant. The opening track, "Public Menace, Freak, Human Fly," wears a groove rut from which Powerman 5000 cannot break free. The rest of the album follows a similar tempo, which may be best described as a 311-meets-Rage bounciness.

There are some refreshing exceptions, such as the fast-paced "Car Crash." But *Mega! Kung Fu Radio* too often leads the listener back to the same tempo rut.

In short, the groove gets boring.

Speaking of boring, the guitar work on this album is uninspired. Or perhaps it's overinspired. Those who have heard Rage have heard these guitar lines already. Guitarist Adam 12 uses lots of wah pedal to spice things up, but the repetitive one-and-two chord riffs simply flop.

However, the guitar is respectably crushing and heavy. And the songs are coherent — they flow well and don't just sound like cut and paste jobs.

The drummer puts his notes in the right places but contributes significantly to Powerman 5000's groove rut. Granted, the guitar lines did not give him much to work with, but his skills should be bolstered with more originality.

Then there's the issue of the hand percussion. It's difficult to determine whether Powerman 5000 employs bongos to soften its hard edge or because bongos are "cool" in trendy music. In either case, the bongos need to go. They sound awkward over the album's heavy rock base.

A final observation: even though *Mega! Kung Fu Radio* is boring, the band plays tightly. At least the members all lock into the same groove. Their live shows are probably great because crowds love to jump and bob.

But the recorded Powerman 5000 can't quite sell itself. The band may even do a better job rescuing kittens — if it could find a way out of its groove rut.

Nuptial Preparation

BY DAPHNE PHILLIPS
THE BATTALION

As soon as her boyfriend popped the question, senior accounting major Amy Ritter started buying bride magazines she never had the inclination to buy before.

"You wait your whole life to buy one of those magazines," Ritter said. "That's one of the first things I did to start plans for the wedding."

Ritter and other students who are planning a wedding said a good place to start is a wedding planner.

"I don't think it is necessary to own a wedding planner, but it is helpful," Ritter said. "It gives you ideas and spells things out for you that are traditional about a wedding."

Modern Bride magazine said in the February-March 1997 issue that with all the decisions to make about the ceremony, reception and dress, setting a budget for the wedding is the first priority.

"When planning your wedding, set a budget and stick with it," Modern Bride magazine said. "A checklist will help you keep track of your expenses."

Ritter said although she has a year to plan for the wedding, she would like to have almost everything done three months before.

After setting a budget, the type of wedding (informal or formal) and where the ceremony will take place become important decisions.

Wendi Burrow, a junior psychology major, said she wanted to plan early to avoid possible problems.

"The church where we are getting married is so small, we could have reserved it the day before," Burrow said. "We reserved it six months in advance, though, as soon as we set the date."

Engaged students discover both hassle and happiness while planning their weddings.

Ritter said she and her fiancé are not procrastinating.

"If we wait, we are not going to get the day, time of day or the church we want," she said.

Other considerations are hiring a wedding consultant, choosing attendants (bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers), forming an invitation list, enrolling in a

bridal gift registry at a department or specialty store and planning a reception.

Ritter said there are certain things she wants to pay for even though her parents are paying for most of the wedding.

"I don't want to be placed on a budget," Ritter said. "I want to do it a little differently. I'd like to pay for

some of my dress and the flowers. Silk flowers just aren't as nice."

A florist, photographer and caterer can increase expenses, but knowing friends or family members who specialize in these areas of expertise may result in a minimal charge.

Burrow said she and her fiancé were lucky enough to know people

who could help.

Wedding decisions can be hectic for students. Some students say it depends on finding the best time is to get married.

"It's harder to plan a wedding when you're in school," Burrow said. "It's hard to concentrate on school, and you're so far away from home."



B-CS natives enjoy comforts of home

BY AARON MEIER
THE BATTALION

The college experience often involves moving away from home and sampling a different environment. However, some students at Texas A&M University grew up in the Bryan-College Station area and say they have not been able to attain the entire experience.

This area is dominated by the University, but Eric Purifoy, a Bryan native and a freshman biomedical science major, said A&M was not a major distraction during his youth.

"When I was little, all I really noticed was that traffic got worse during the school year," Purifoy said.

On the other hand, Ashley Robison, a College Station native and freshman community health major,

said having a major university in such close proximity offers many opportunities that other small towns do not.

"We've always had OPAS season tickets," Robison said. "I went to a lot of the football games which were exciting and we could get tickets to any sporting event."

Robison said it was difficult to decide to go to college in the same town she grew up in.

"I would have rather gone out of town, but it is so hard to pass up such a high quality school simply because it is in your town," Robison said.

The first day of class offers many challenges to new students. From finding classes to eating in the cafeteria, the adjustment to independence can be stressful.

But Matt Scanlan, a College Station native and sophomore history major, said his experiences at A&M liberated him from the traditional "map dependence" some new students develop.

"Having lived here so long made getting adjusted a lot easier," Scanlan said. "Since I already knew where most of my classes were, I had an easier time getting around campus than most freshmen."

Students from the Bryan-College Station area say the transition to college life was smoother because their parents were there to help them.

"It is nice to be able to go home whenever you want," Robison said. "It's a place to wash your clothes, and if you get homesick, you are just

two minutes away from mom."

Purifoy had a medical situation that made his parents' proximity an advantage.

"I sprained my ankle and I was able to go home and get the nice 'mom treatment' while she took care of me," he said.

Marium Mohiuddin, a College Station native and a sophomore biomedical science major, lives at home and said her mother ensures she does not neglect her health during finals.

"It is nice to know that mom is there to take care of me," Mohiuddin said. "During finals, she sometimes made me take a break and eat something."

Meeting people at a school of over 40,000 students can intimidate even the most sociable person, but local students said friends that joined them at A&M made the transition easier.

"Having all my friends around, but not living at home feels kind of like summer camp," Purifoy said. "It seems like the 13th grade, except I have more privileges and more experience."

Scanlan said he still talks to his high school friends, but he enjoyed meeting other students.

"I see my high school friends on campus, but living in the dorms, I quickly met a new bunch of people and made new friends," Scanlan said.

Scanlan also said students that do not venture outside the same group of friends from high school limit the college experience.

"I feel sorry for the people that don't try to make new friends," Scanlan said. "I have met so many great people. They are missing out."

Purifoy said the large student population of A&M makes it difficult not to make new friends.

"There are a lot of people that got the 'Bryan High: The College Years' syndrome, but there are 40,000 people here from all over the world to make friends with," Purifoy said.

Scanlan said he appreciates going to school in the same town his parents live.

"I have the best of both worlds," Scanlan said. "I get the freedom of living in the dorm and also get to go home any time I want."

"There are a lot of people that got the 'Bryan High: The College Years' syndrome, but there are 40,000 people here from all over the world to make friends with."

Eric Purifoy
Freshman biomedical science major



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