



PHOTO COURTESY OF PHIL PRITCHETT

Phil Pritchett will bring his rock sounds to Fitzwilly's tonight.

Pop for the people

Pritchett brings Beatles-fueled pop to Fitzwilly's

BY SCOTT HARRIS
The Battalion

It is rare when a musician explodes onto the music scene and is an instant success, which is why most artists start out small and work their way up.

On that same note, most popular musicians loath and despise their days playing small clubs for little money.

Then there is Phil Pritchett, not yet an artist who has hit the big time, but one who enjoys playing the small gigs and staying true to his fans.

The fact that he enjoys playing as an independent musician without the support of a major label makes it hard to find large venues to play in, which is why Pritchett seems right at home at a venue like Fitzwilly's.

Pritchett said he is independent by choice and not default.

"I've had some offers, some songwriting deals. We get paid to write songs in Nashville," Pritchett said. "A lot of bands wear independence like a badge and then sign the first deal that comes in front of them."

But any venue is better than no venue for a musician who started his career in the eighth grade. Pritchett said in a press release he sang a Beatles' song for one of his eighth grade classes.

"My friend Wes (Cunningham) and I were both obsessed with the Beatles," Pritchett said. "We had to sing something to try out for this play, so we did 'Love Me Do.' We had two part harmony, harmonica, tambourine, the works! The judges loved it and insisted we spend the rest of the school day touring the classrooms and doing our act. The kids loved it, too. It was better than listening to a teacher's lecture I guess."

On top of being a full-time musician, Pritchett must also juggle a business career. He owns and manages his own record label company, Spitune Records.

"It is hard, it is really hard," Pritchett said. "But in October, I am hiring a manager. It will be a big step up. I will be able to concentrate on my music and not deal with the business side of things. We are doing exponentially better with each passing year. That is how I like to look at it — I just want to keep growing and, hopefully, it will lead to something big."

Pritchett has been playing for several years in College Station and he says this is his favorite place to perform. He said he has a really devoted fan base here which consists of several hundred people.

Phil Pritchett will perform tonight at 9 at Fitzwilly's.

REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS

Eyes Wide Shut

Starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman

Now Playing at Hollywood 16

It is no surprise that with such titles to his name as *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining* and *Lolita*, director Stanley Kubrick has once again bestowed audiences with a dark portrayal of human existence. *Eyes Wide Shut* takes the viewer into the minds of Dr. William Harford (Cruise) as he learns the truth behind his wife's flirtatious behavior and consequently falls deep into the lure of temptation, desire and fear.

Models, prostitutes and mass orgy all tempt the well-to-do Manhattan doctor, but in the scope of things, these temptations do nothing but evoke his own fear and resistance. This is what makes the film, on the whole, a true drama of the mind, but being three hours long, it really means that nothing seems to really happen. Basically, *Eyes Wide Shut* is hard to watch. To fully experience what really is a brilliant portrayal of emotion would be to view the film three or four times, and that would be about as agonizing as Chinese water torture.

Regardless, this film is a master work of cinematography. If anything, the dramatic redundancy can be avoided by simply absorbing the film's brilliant use of color, motion and light. All play a large part in the infamous orgy scene, for instance, which is compelling in Kubrick's amazing use of nudity and sex fallen to the backdrop of darkness, desire and fear.

Cruise does a fabulous job but is not too well accompanied by Kidman, who

unfortunately gives a poor and shallow performance. *Eyes* also has an outstanding cast of supporting actors and actresses, all of whom mesh well into the script.

Eyes Wide Shut is difficult to characterize. It is long and redundant but at the same time deep, symbolic and truly characteristic of Stanley Kubrick and his artistic brilliance. (Grade: B+)

—Brian Fleming

Muppets from Space

Starring Kermit the Frog and Gonzo the Great

Now Playing at Hollywood 16

There is not a moviegoer alive who has not at sometime felt a twinge of sympathy for Gonzo — one of the stock characters in the Muppets troupe. Gonzo long has been saddled with a most lamentable identity crisis — his official classification in the animal kingdom is "whatever."

Alas, however, there is justice in Muppetdom. In Gonzo the Great's latest cinematic vehicle, *Muppets from Space*, he finally finds himself.

After receiving cosmic messages channeled through his cereal, a sandwich and two talking fish, Gonzo is contacted by his long-lost family. They are extraterrestrials.

The zany plot centers around Gonzo's quest to make contact with his alien brothers.

After learning that Gonzo is from outer space, the government's cronies capture him, intending to extract his brain for research. But Kermit and company manage to release Gonzo just in time for



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM HENSON PICTURES

him to meet up with his relatives' spaceship, where everyone parties down and Gonzo gets shot from a cannon — his signature trick.

Along the way, there is much hilarity. There are the standard slapstick jokes for the kids, but there is plenty of sophisticated, random humor for the Muppets' older fans.

The soundtrack is literally funkadelic, packed with old Jackson-Five-era tunes. The music is a definite complement to the Muppets' modern style. In another life, Gonzo would have been a Commodore.

The human appearances in the film are mediocre compared to cameos by the likes of Steve Martin in earlier films.

Except for a funny cameo by Hulk Hogan, most of the actors turn in lacklus-

ter performances. But the actors are not who audiences came to see. And if viewers come to see the Muppets doing what they do best — making people laugh — they will be mightily rewarded. (Grade: A)

—Caleb McDaniel

Blair Witch Project

Starring Heather Donahue, Joshua Leonard and Michael Williams

Coming soon to Hollywood 16

"In October of 1994, three student filmmakers disappeared in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland while shooting a documentary.

A year later their footage was found..." This brief statement found on the poster of *The Blair Witch Project* describes the creation of what is now one of the biggest urban legends of the 90s.

The three students took a Hi8 camcorder to shoot the making of the documentary for themselves and a 16mm camera for the actual documentary.

The footage from these cameras, found a year later, was pieced together from these two sources to find out what happened to the three students during the time they were lost in the woods.

What *The Blair Witch Project* became was a documentary of terror.

The film follows these three students as they get lost in the woods and are stalked each night by something unseen that leaves arcane symbols and ritual mounds throughout the forest. The haunting becomes more and more intense each night.

The fear turns to paranoia and dread and the documentary becomes terrifying. Each night the students hear sounds of screaming out in the woods and try to find proof with the cameras and sound recording equipment.

Some of the scariest moments are a black screen with only the sound of the scared students in the tent and the noises outside.

The Blair Witch Project is probably the most innovative horror film since *Jaws*. It doesn't rely on serial killers or hideous monsters to scare up terror. The frightening elements are psychological, and they work. If planning to see this film, just cancel any camping plans for awhile. (Grade: A)

—Kyle Whitacre

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Welch marries Palmer in California Saturday

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Raquel Welch has remarried, exchanging vows with restaurant owner Richard Palmer.

They were wed Saturday at her Beverly Hills home. The couple had dated for about two years and became engaged last September.

"It was a small, private ceremony with only close family and friends," Jackie Becher, the actress' publicist, said yesterday.

There was no word on a honeymoon. "I don't know that they've made plans," Becher said, adding that Ms. Welch will be in Vancouver, British Columbia, for sev-

eral weeks working on a movie called *Bats*.

Palmer owns the Mulberry Street Italian restaurant in Beverly Hills and Richie's Neighborhood Pizza stores.

It is Ms. Welch's fourth marriage and Palmer's second.

She has two children — Damon and Tahnee — from husband No. 1, James Westley Welch.

Cyrus dropped by label, plans to pursue acting

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — With sales of his records down sharply from his debut eight years ago, Billy Ray Cyrus has been dropped by Mercury Records.

His manager insists the split isn't reason for Cyrus to sing a new refrain of "Achy Breaky Heart."

"There is interest in Los Angeles as far as film and TV, but that will never take over Billy's career," Al Schiltz said. "His first priority is music."

The 37-year-old country star earned sudden fame in 1992 with "Achy Breaky Heart," a single that crossed over to the pop charts and helped sell 9 million copies of his first album, *Some Gave All*. His sales have slipped to about 136,000 with his latest effort, *Shot Full of Love*.

The split was friendly, Mercury Nashville president Luke Lewis said Tuesday.

"It is with a great deal of respect for an artist who brought a lot of success to

this label that I make this announcement, allowing Billy Ray to pursue other career options," Lewis said.

Anderson writes Mbeki to free elephants to free elephants

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) — Former "Baywatch" star Pamela Anderson Lee wants President Thabo Mbeki to save elephants that were beaten by an animal trader, an animal rights organization said yesterday.

Ms. Anderson, a member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), wrote a letter to Mbeki calling animal traders "heartless, money-hungry men ravaging Africa for its animals."

A copy of her letter to Mbeki was dis-

tributed by PETA.

The trader, Riccardo Ghiazza, captured 30 baby elephants in Botswana last year.

He brought them to South Africa for training by Indonesians whose training methods include the use of sharp prods and water and food deprivation.

Last year, the National Association of Societies to Prevent Cruelty to Animals won custody of the elephants in a court battle.

However, an appeals court ordered the organization to allow the elephants to remain in Ghiazza's possession.



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