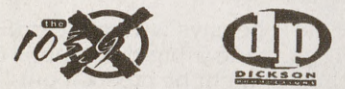


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AGGIELIFE

Page 4 • Monday, November 1, 1999



**Ben Harper and
the Innocent
Criminals**
Burn to Shine
Virgin Records

Ben Harper and his sweet, velvety voice return on his fourth effort, but his trademark Hawaiian-built Weisenborn acoustic guitar is nowhere to be found on the record.

Harper, turning to electric guitars for the first time in his career, uses the instrument to inject an overwhelming amount of energy into the album.

Harper's problem with the album is finding a theme — he has such range that he almost flaunts it. But the songs do expose his listeners to a musical buffet.

On three back-to-back tracks, Harper explores an almost vaudeville jazz ("Suzie Blue"), a human beat-box intro ("Steal My Kisses")

and an up-tempo, 12-bar blues number ("Burn to Shine").

His true roots shine through in a few slow, vocal-driven songs like "The Woman in You" and "Two Hands of a Prayer."

Add to those tracks Harper's angelic voice and underrated rhythm section, and he and the Innocent Criminals shine brightly, like their latest album. (Grade: B)

— Jeff Webb



**Pocket Size
100% Human**
CD courtesy of Atlantic
Recording Corporation

Pocket Size's lead vocals, controlled by the female counterpart of the group, are reminiscent of Stevie Nicks. That, however, is where the similarity ends.

Pocket Size creates an interesting mix of rhythms through-

out the album. In "Make a Sound," there is a likable electronic sound that plays during the majority of the song.

The first track, "Human Touch," is a good introduction to the rest of 100% Human. The lyrics, "We've got to hold on to each other, so hard to find a friend," summarize the central theme of the track — that people feel the same pain and have the same needs.

The most engaging track on the album is "Stay Till the End." With distorted vocals and a seductive chorus, it leaves a memorable tune in one's mind.

In the song "Death of Me," the group sings about trying to leave a relationship but not being able to do so because of the familiar love.

The group decides to fight "Death of Me," with "Squashy Lemon Squeezy," a track about an apparent meant-to-be relationship which is yet to be formed.

In the song, Pocket Size sings, "You can't catch me, but late I've fallen over you," emphasizing the simplicity of falling in love with another despite previous engagements.

The album is thought-provoking and an easy listen. Besides any group able to pull off a song titled "Squashy Lemon Squeezy" deserves some listening consideration. (Grade: B+)

— Jeff Webb

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F = burn in effigy**

C = average

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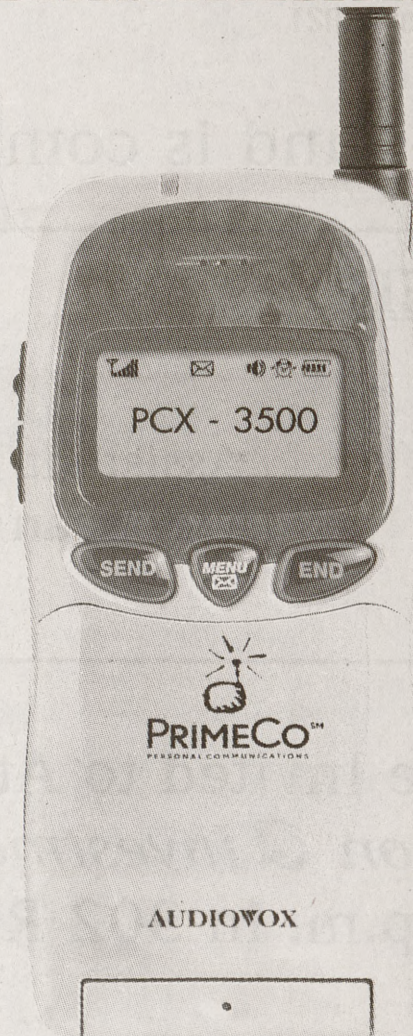
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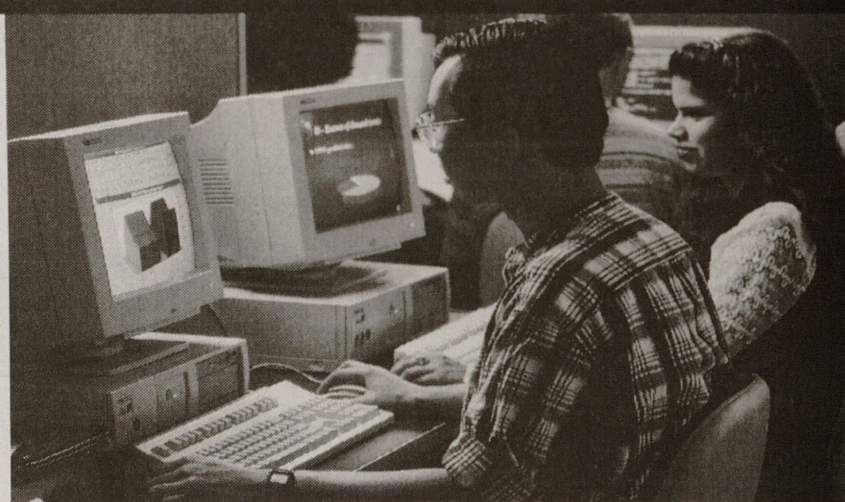


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