

## Slave to the Music



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JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

With the blistering summer heat hitting Texas again, concert-goers are foolishly anticipating the summer music festival season. Soon, self-proclaimed music connoisseurs nationwide will pack themselves into arenas to listen to terrible bands while rubbing elbows and other appendages with every sweaty biker who saved up enough stolen pennies to pay the admission. Their armpits will open in the sweltering heat as the concert-goers drown in the fecal matter of total strangers while attempting to negotiate the portable toilets. After all this, their throats will shout expletives at them and spit on them after stealing their girlfriends. All this for only \$75.

Big summer tours started with Lollapalooza in the early '90s, which toured progressive and rarely entertaining acts across the nation to entertain fans of alternative music. But like everything else in the music industry, the corporate leech latched on and sucked it dry of the little creativity and vitality it managed to eke out. All of a sudden, music was not about wholesome things like drugs and sex anymore; it was about profits and ... well ... profits.

Then someone remembered music was about art (also known in the entertainment industry as drugs and sex) and the listeners (also known in the industry as the millions). People with knowledge of the Internet were able to exchange music files and store songs on their computers and listen to them at their convenience. But Big Brother, and one must assume Big Momma, found out, and record companies decided to live the American dream of crushing free thought in the defense of commercialism and profits. Otherwise, they might have to get real jobs instead of sitting around and identifying the CDs teenagers buy to fit into whatever social group they decide to affiliate themselves with.

So instead of being an expression of teen angst and maniacal vocals, the summer concert series has become a politically charged event where fans choose their corner.

In the first corner is Metallica, the biggest, and by far the loudest, band going up against Napster. Not only are its members angry about the price of walkers and Viagra increasing, they deplore the loss of royalties from unrestricted trading of their music. God forbid they should be forced to accept the poor man's Porsche Boxster over the modestly more expensive Lamborghini Diablo.

To get back at these economic and tastefully challenged fans, Metallica is touring this summer and charging fans \$75 to attend. Hookers cost less than that ... or so it has been said.

In the other corner is Limp Bizkit, who is defending Napster and the free trade of music, and of course, is touring for free this summer. Limp Bizkit has come down on the side of free trade of ideas, and all those who would rather go through the hell of a free concert than pay should applaud them. Much like the man, who in-

vented the Pet Rock, Limp Bizkit knew what it was doing. Despite the criticisms of Limp Bizkit's music style, this band has put its money where its mouth is, and is likely to be rewarded with increased album sales. But whichever side fans choose, they

are losers in either corner, having to pay \$17 for a piece of mirrored plastic that costs less than a dollar to manufacture. America Online sends out at least two free CDs a week to add to their subscribers' coaster collections, and companies expect consumers to pay \$17 for the same thing? Anyone who is stupid enough to pay that much for a boy band or Kid Rock deserves to be ripped off. Of course, music fans can forego the

political agendas of these concerts and join the rebellion against authority, society and non-extreme sports with the Warped Tour. This tour should prove to be more fun than the Metallica or Limp Bizkit tours, as it holds a giant middle finger in the face of the mainstream recording industry, charges less for its CDs and merchandising, and loves the fact that Napster gives its bands exposure. However, the Warped Tour will not be for everyone, meaning anyone older than 16. The highlight of the show will undoubtedly be children who have escaped their chaperones accosting anyone who can buy them cigarettes or beer. If none of these tours appeal to music

fans, there are always the billions of boy and girl bands this summer — but it be better to be shot in the foot and compete in a 24-hour dance marathon than to attend any of these. While the music industry tries to suppress the digital future of music, fans can attend the concerts of their favorite bands while reminiscing about the days when rock stars fought for simpler causes, like the right to piss off parents, the right to use mind-altering substances, and the right to have unprotected sex with various unknown partners with no fear of consequences. Unfortunately, the music industry has not found a way for us to go back to those days, but even if they had, they would just ruin it anyway.

Kyle Whitacre and Jason Bennyhoff are senior journalism majors.

### DJ DB The Higher Education Drum 'N Bass Session CD courtesy of F-111 Records

Drum 'n bass can be the hardest, darkest music in the world, or the most melodic, mellow music. In his new mixed CD, DB combines both the hard and the soft into one of the best drum 'n bass mixes of the year.

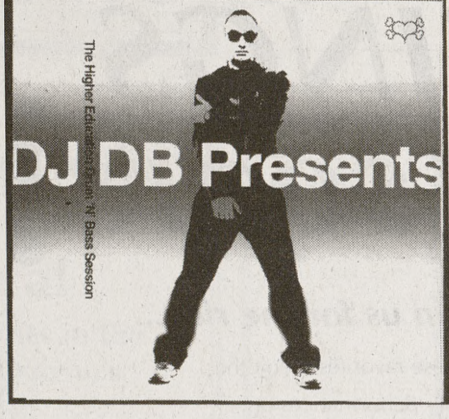
*Higher Education* opens with mellow, melodic, vocal-driven tracks and moves rapidly into hard-edged songs with progressively deepening and more menacing basslines. This transition is highlighted by F-111's new up-and-comer Acen's remix of Rakim's classic "I Know You Got Soul," a pounder in its own right that only improves with the addition of Acen's maniacal basslines.

DB's mixing is smooth as silk and is perhaps best for the last segment of *Higher Education* which moves into jazzy drum 'n bass ending with the E-Z Rollers trademark track "Tough at the Top," an essential addition to any drum 'n bass DJ's record bag. Unfortunately, the mixing lacks the tricks that make Dara's CDs such a joy.

Still, the mixing is undeniably clean and the track selection is top-notch. DB said drum 'n bass has traditionally been saddled with secondary status in the U.S. club scene, but if he and other major producers can consistently make CDs of this quality, the future of drum 'n bass is bright in America. This is despite drum 'n bass's traditional ties to the U.K.

"Drum 'n bass has been the poor brother in the United States for a long time, and it's frustrating," DB said. "But there's a lot of domestic talent in San Francisco and New York, and with drum 'n bass dying down a bit in England, the U.S. scene will steadily improve."

If DB is right, it is good news for the U.S. club scene. (Grade: B+)



— Jason Bennyhoff

### Sinead O'Connor Faith and Courage CD courtesy of Atlantic Records

Sinead O'Connor makes a triumphant return to the music scene with *Faith and Courage*, a fine arrangement of smooth sounds and hypnotic melodies.

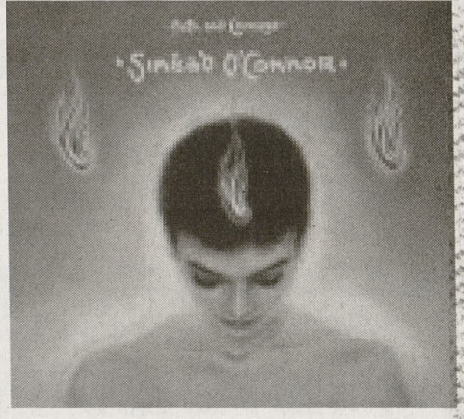
Public disapproval of O'Connors' infamous past and her notorious expression of religious beliefs ruined her reputation as a musician in the early 1990s. However, O'Connor has completely revamped her image, increasing her popularity in the music world with her latest recording.

*Faith and Courage's* 13 tracks center on strength, determination and ultimate forgiveness.

"No Man's Woman" and "Jealous" are two tracks that define the entire CD. The themes of these songs are conquering personal fears.

"The Healing Room" and "The Lamb's Book of Life" combine the melodic sounds of brass and percussion instruments with sounds of laughter. O'Connor attempts to rekindle her reputation with her new album and she will probably be successful. She is certain to have a bright future in the music industry if she continues to release recordings of this quality.

With *Faith and Courage*, O'Connor tackles her radical past and emerges once again as a lyrical genius. (Grade: A)



— Dewey Badeaux



### k.d. lang Invincible Summer CD courtesy of Warner Brothers Records

*Invincible Summer* is filled with warmth and solitude. The album's 11 brilliant tracks describe the temptations and free spirit associated with the heated summer season.

This lyrical love story is a mixture of upbeat, spacey tunes and slow, jazz-like songs.

Its tracks describe the excitement and hardships associated with falling in and out of love.

"Summerfling" and "It's Happening With You" have catchy, disco beats, perfect listening for a road trip to the beach.

"The Consequences of Falling," "Love's Great Ocean," "What Better Said" and "Only Love" have much slower tempos. These songs are ideal for watching a sunset or relaxing on a hot day at the pool.

The music of k.d. lang has been described as daring, captivating and thought provoking. One word can summarize lang's latest, sunny achievement: invincible. (Grade: A-)

— Dewey Badeaux

**A = instant classic**      **B = a cut above**      **C = average**  
**D = don't buy it**      **F = burn in effigy**



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