

Opinion

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THE BATTALION

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Rock this country world

This weekend at the supermarket, a recent special issue of Time magazine splashed with the intoxicating message "Music Goes Global," featuring vibrant, colorful pictures of international artists such as Shakira, Max de Castro and Bjork. In a time of global uncertainty, the idea of music, a long-standing form of human expression, merging together or even intermingling seemed like a pleasant sign of hope. Driving home past Northgate, one begins to wonder if music has "gone global" in College Station, as well. After all, this is a major University, and universities tend to be the test tubes for all that is new and hip in the world. So where is the "global" music in College Station, or is it possible that Aggieland is devoid of a

musical movement that is large enough to make the cover of Time magazine? With a new music minor offered on campus, new opportunities are available for Aggies to break out of the country-music culture. There is a big world out there, and the recent attacks impress upon students the necessity of better understanding other cultures.

Defining "global music" is not an easy task. It does not take a degree in music theory to realize that the sounds of other cultures increasingly have become more predominant in America's mainstream music. For the last few years, popular Latin rhythms that have made their way into mainstream pop music. The cultural influences do not stop there. However, just realizing this is not enough. In the past years, the United States has held a powerful position of economic, military and cultural dominance. In doing this, the United States has attracted immigrants who bring with them new forms of music and stimulate musical competition among other countries. The result has been international musicians striving to create new musical genres by asserting their national and cultural identity, while maintaining American hegemony. For example, in Tijuana, Mexico, young DJs are mixing traditional "porteno" (a polka-like music) with techno to create a new genre called "Nortec," and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the great female vocalist, Marisa Monte is smoothly blending samba and art-pop, plus, the creation of "global" music.

A&M, at first glance, appears to be completely devoid of any musical diversity. Almost anywhere one goes, country music seems to follow. The bars, the clubs, Wal-Mart Supercenter — it is everywhere. However, there are a decent amount of places that

offer different kinds of music such as rap or techno, and there are many local bars such as the Third Floor Cantina and Zapatos where one can find great local bands of all different genres. Also, there are organizations on campus such as MSC Town Hall who, in collaboration with multi-cultural organizations, often bring international music groups to College Station. MSC Town Hall is responsible for bringing us Live, Destiny's Child, Jimmy Fallon and the annual Planet Northgate, a festival of international music. According to Nathanael Taylor, MSC Town Hall chairman, "The organization tries to get as many different performers here, but it is sometimes difficult due to our location in between Austin and Houston," two major concert mecca's. Carroll Albritton, manager of Reed Arena, also mentions the difficulty with scheduling concerts due to the prioritized basketball season. However, both agree that they are pushing to bring a more

diversified musical experience to A&M. The pulse of "global" music at A&M may be weak, but it is still there and it promises gradually to become stronger in the future. This means that in the last few decades we have managed to break down and remodel old traditions. With the help of the Internet and other technological advances, Aggies should actively seek to open up their world. If music is the universal language, "global" music stands as a torch for all those who hope there is a chance for the world's citizens to communicate peacefully with each other. The great Jamaican reggae star, Bob Marley, once asked the question, "Won't you help me sing these songs of freedom?" Today, from across this new global music canvas, artists have finally responded with a reluctant yet strong, "yes." College students should do the same.

Jennifer Lozano is a junior English major.

Bombs over Afghanistan

Despite there being nothing more exhilarating than seeing stuff blow up in grainy black and white video on CNN, the current bombing campaign against Afghanistan must cease. A good many readers are now thinking "Shut-up you pacifist hippie. Go back to Austin — or Harvard." Yet this concept of halting the bombing is not related to an aversion

to blowing stuff up or even the desire to spare Afghan lives. Granted, these may be regrettable side effects, but they are not the catalyzing notion behind such radical thought. The foundation behind such an idea stems from a rational assessment of the last six weeks and what must be done to preserve the present and protect the future.

It is the predominant view that Sept. 11 is the 21st century's Pearl Harbor. Once again, the "sleeping giant" has been awakened. Only this time, there is not a great rival nation for revenge to be extracted on. The radical group that attacked America took more lives than they have members. If this war on terrorism is to be successful, revenge can have no part of it. There are not enough members of al-Qaida to fulfill the current level of American bloodlust. This war must be focused on preserving the safety and stability of the nation.

An illusion of increased security is fed to us by network television as we watch bombs shower from the Afghan sky to deliver a dose of American stability to the world. These bombs have little to do with actual American safety. A small, radical force, not the people of Afghanistan, attacked America. America's response has been to bomb the hell out of the Afghan people. Yes, our objectives are said to be military and not civilian targets. But if our bombs are smart and laser guided why were civilian housings as well as U.N. and Red Cross operations within Afghanistan bombed this past week? One may argue that these are isolated instances. If American bombs were focused on military targets and not upon the average Afghan, tens of thousands of civilians would not already have fled their country.

Regretfully the bombing continues on targets other than those that will ensure American safety. The continued bombing corresponds with continued talk from both sides of the American government's mouth. "We are not against the people of Afghanistan. We may be destroying your infrastructure (bridges, roads, communications), along with it your way of life but we are giving you rice cakes stamped with the American flag." (Food drops actually include rice cakes with Old Glory adorning them). This is a ridiculous public relations campaign. How could the uprooted Afghan people understand this any other way than, "We have destroyed your town, possibly your family members ... have some puffed rice?"

It would be ludicrous not to assume the bombing has traumatically effected substantial portions of those within Afghanistan. As was stated earlier, this argument has nothing to do with compassion for the Afghan people. However, in a nation where the majority of the people already have close to nothing, how much would have to be taken away before they are willing to strap on a bomb and head across the Pacific? How many family members would have to die before a regular boy is turned radical, ready to begin training to avenge the death of his parents? In a sector of the world that prior to Sept. 11 anti-American sentiment was already high, can America afford to indiscriminately chunk bombs into the countryside?

Apply international pressure to the Taliban. Freeze terrorists assets, but do not manufacture the next generation of militant extremist that will attack our children. As sweet as unbridled revenge would be, collateral damage within this volatile sector of the world will inevitably wreak violence on America for generations. The continuation of current actions will ensure that the United States versus militant Islamic factions will join the ranks of other great historical terrorist relationships; Palestinians versus Israelis, French versus Algerians, Russians versus Chechens, Irish Catholics versus English Protestants. All responded with unrestricted violence against their respective terrorist nation. All are still attempting to rebuild the illusion of security America so recently lost.

Todd Macek is a senior history major.



JENNIFER LOZANO



TODD MACEK



MAIL CALL

Cartoon of the Day offends Muslim Community

In response to the October 24 "Cartoon of the Day":

How offensive. What ditch did that cartoonist come from? That cartoon, is tasteless and offensive to Muslims.

My mother wears a hijab (or hood as you ignorants call it), as do my sister and my aunts. To portray a woman with a hijab as a decadent American woman sitting in a bar is way out of line.

I do not care of your portrayal of the man in the cartoon. It could be any person wearing a beard and a turban. But the woman's outfit is distinctively have to Muslim garment. Apologize now. Or better yet, tell me the "Cartoonist's" real name so I can pray that God will slap him in the face. Or is that cartoon representative of *The Battalion's* view on Muslims?

Tauhid Albar
Graduate Student

The *Battalion* encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to:

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EDITORIAL

Texas A&M University — Celebrating 125 Years



THE BATTALION

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KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

A&M should allow Bonfire emblem to be used

It has been almost two years since the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. The administration remains undecided on the future of the Bonfire tradition, but extreme measures have been taken to avoid the sensitivity of this issue, and that should not be tolerated by the students.

The collegiate licensing office has prohibited any use of the Bonfire emblems or insignia for marketing or commercial purposes. Because of the moratorium, the Bonfire emblem can be used by no one until the 2002 Bonfire burns. The actions taken by the collegiate licensing office seem hasty and foolish and serve to eradicate an institutional memory of Bonfire.

By removing Bonfire emblems, administrators are attaching a negative connotation to all that once

reminded students of the burning spirit of Bonfire. Such drastic action by the licensing office and other A&M administrators are unnecessary. The Aggie Moms Club and College Station businesses such as Inspirations and Things Remembered have been cautioned to avoid using the Bonfire image.

This will be the first time in memory that the Bonfire emblem will not appear on Texas A&M football tickets. Aggie Bonfire has been printed on football tickets for years, as a reminder of the prior year's Bonfire but will not be used this season because the issue is still taboo. It has been two years since the collapse, and it is time for Aggies to remember their friends rather than mourn their losses. The memory of Aggie Bonfire has not always been

negative; it burned brightly for almost 90 years. If the tradition of Bonfire is forgotten, then the memory of those who lost their lives is likewise erased.

A&M should remember those who died in 1999 and allow the Bonfire symbol continue to be a part of Aggie tradition. Bonfire licensing should be available to responsible advertisers regardless if Bonfire ever burns again. Aggie Bonfire is still a vital part of A&M tradition and culture. To remember and cherish the Bonfire is only part of the endless healing process for the 12 lost Aggies. Whether or not Bonfire burns again is irrelevant, because Bonfire's eternal flame will burn in every Aggie's heart, as long as A&M administrators do not extinguish its memory.