

'Just kiss me'

'90210,' hated it

ALLISON WILLIAMS Asst.Features Editor

Brandon, Kelly, Donna, David, Steve and Andrea are going back to school and finally the semester can really begin.

Contrary to popular belief, Labor Day is not the official kickoff for fall. Everyone knows that you can only go back to school and hit the books with full concentration once the TV season premieres are over. And it's officially the end of summer when Beverly Hills, 90210 goes back to school.

I was especially anticipating the season premiere of 90210 last Wednesday night. Last season ended with a series of cliffhangers, and I couldn't wait to find out what happened. Donna and David broke up, Dylan's newfound family stole his inheritance, Kelly and Brandon were becoming an item and Brenda was leaving the show.

But what happened on the season premiere was a grave disappointment to this die-hard fan.

I have always loved to hate 90210. The plots and characters are so bad they're good, but on Wednesday night, good bad turned into just plain bad.

If the show is going to portray college life so inaccurately, the writers, at the very least, have the responsibility to make it entertaining.

The result was anything but entertaining. In fact, the plot and characters this fall seem almost wishy-washy.

The biggest part of this problem is that Brenda has been written out of the show, and Kelly from Saved By the Bell is a poor substitute for the bad girl Brenda played so well.

Brenda's sneer and outright bitchiness will be sadly missed. No television show can survive without a bad guy. Valerie (formerly Kelly on Saved By the Bell) is the replacement evil character, but it's more like Jeckyl and Hyde. Why can't these writers decide? On the surface she is the quintessential girl next door, but at the end of the first episode, we find she is really a wolf in sheep's clothing. The outside perkiness is really annoying, and I personally feel she should have stuck with Zach and the gang.

OK, so I can forgive a casting mistake, but this does not excuse the returning characters.

Brandon played the part of Mr. All-American with his usual finesse, but the jury is still out on the goatee.

Dylan also made a grand entrance with a liberal amount of facial hair, but his laid-back attitude once considered attractive is just boring. And would you be so laid-back you would just sit and not do anything about recovering millions of dollars?

As for Donna and Kelly, the scene at the hairdresser was... touching. Donna moped over David for a whole episode and even acted as if a reconciliation might be in the forecast. Kelly has completed changed character from Beverly Hills bad girl to Brandon wife-to-be.

Do these people even remember the last episode?

I don't know what happened but Dylan, Brandon, Kelly, Donna, David, Steve and Andrea have disappointed me. What happened to the cattiness, the dirt and the outrageous plots? Beverly Hills, 90210 has turned into the last thing I ever would have expected—boring. Despite the great possibilities from the last season, the plot fell flat, and as for the characters, I've lost hope. I can only tell fellow fans: better luck with Melrose Place.

Afghan Whigs latest hopefully just a phase

SOUNDADVICE

■ Indie rock veterans Afghan Whigs release disappointing follow up, 'What Jail is Like.'

ROB BERNSTEN Staff Writer

WHAT JAIL IS LIKE Afghan Whigs

✓✓

In the title track to The Afghan Whigs' new EP "What Jail is Like," vocalist Greg Dulli sings, "this must be what jail is really like." That is the general feeling when listening to this album.

This EP is a big disappointment coming from The Afghan Whigs, whose year-old release "Gentlemen" at times flirted with greatness. Besides the song "What Jail is Like," which first appeared on "Gentlemen," this new album is only minutely salvageable. Only the concert version of "Now You Know" saves this seven-song EP from being completely awful, and even that song is noticeably inferior to the studio version.

The four covers are all terrible. All too often frontman Greg Dulli sighs and

whines and does not sing. Dulli drags many words and syllables out too long. "Mr. Superlove" would be a very good song if Dulli would stay silent. The banjo, piano and guitar all fit very nicely together until Dulli butchers the song with his strained vocals.

"Dark End of the Street" and "Little Girl Blue" are both seemingly apathetic. The only decent part of "Dark End of the Street" is when the words "they're gonna find us" are repeated, but that may be because the rest of the song is so bad. "Little Girl Blue" should be disregarded completely.

Both "Mr. Superlove" and "My World is Empty Without You/ I Hear a Symphony" are both much too long. The last minute of "Mr. Superlove" should be taken out altogether, and even with the reduction, five minutes still seems a bit lengthy. "My World is Empty Without You/ I Hear a Symphony" is monotonous when there are no vocals and becomes tedious when Dulli's voice filters in. The seven-minute epic could have easily been cut to five minutes, but that would not

save the song. It would just make 120 less painful seconds.

What makes this album that much worse is The Afghan Whigs and Greg Dulli have covered songs well in the past. On 1992's "Uptown Avondale," Dulli's voice and the band's backing vocals were pleasantly haunting on "Come See About Me," rather than irritatingly whiny on this album. Dulli himself was the lead singer in The Backbeat Band, and sang the old Beatles' songs rather well. The key word is sang.

The concert versions of "Now You Know" and "What Jail is Like" are pretty well performed, but they prove that The Afghan Whigs are a far superior studio band. The songs are more musically united and vocally focused on "Gentlemen" than on this EP.

In the concert performance of "What Jail is Like," words and sometimes even endings of vocal lines get cut off by Dulli, which takes away some of the emotion from the song. In the chorus, the word "night" is missing from the line "and it goes down every night." More important

is when "like" is omitted from "This must be what jail is really like." That one word gives the song its depressive beauty, and without it, the heart of the song is missing.

"What Jail is Like" is a drastic regression from "Gentlemen" and The Afghan Whigs' earlier work on Sub Pop Records. Hopefully, this was just a bad EP and nothing like this will come from The Afghan Whigs again. Hopefully, this is just a phase.

Ratings

✓✓✓✓ "Run out and buy it!"

✓✓✓ "Borrow it."

✓✓ "Rejected by VH-1."

✓ "Dollar bin."

Money magazine rates Florida's New College best buy

College Press Service

NEW YORK—In a new survey of the best U.S. colleges, Ivy League schools such as Yale, Harvard and Princeton don't even rank in the top 10.

In fact, they're rated 17th, 82nd and 94th respectively, well behind New College of the University of South Florida, which is "Money" magazine's best college buy in the nation.

For the second year in a row, New College has been given the top ranking in Money magazine's survey of America's 100 top values in four-year undergraduate schools.

Located in Sarasota, New College kept its ranking by maintaining its high academic standards without raising tuition, say editors of "Money Guide: The Best College Buys Now," which hit newsstands Sept. 6.

"This is important because it reflects on our economic as well as our academic quality," says USF president Betty Castor, who called the second-year rating "tremendous."

"Money" magazine ranks the best col-

"It's like a small liberal arts college, but it's connected to a major university. It's pretty unique."

Director of Special Projects James Feeny

lege buys by analyzing 16 measures of educational quality, including entrance exam results, faculty resources and positions, instructional and student services budgets, library resources, graduation rates and default ratios on graduates' student loans.

"Money" staffers then take that data and compare it to tuition costs for each university to come up with their value ratings.

Opened in 1964 as a private liberal arts college, New College now is one of only two "public honors" colleges run by its board of trustees (the other, St. Mary's College of Maryland, joined the "Money" top 10 list for the first time this year). In 1975, the college joined the State University System of Florida. When it became a state school, New College was allowed to keep its selective admissions policy. (The average New College student's SAT

score is 1,200.)

Because of the support it now receives from the state's university system, New College's tuition has dropped by more than 80 percent for Florida residents and more than 60 percent for out-of-state students. This year, tuition is \$2,030 for Florida residents and \$7,943 for out-of-state students, significantly lower than most private institutions.

"It's like a small liberal arts college, but it's connected to a major university," says James Feeny, director of special projects. "It's pretty unique."

Rice University in Houston, Texas, finished in the No. 2 spot in the survey for the second straight year, thanks in part, to only a minimal increase in tuition. "Our tuition remains about half that of comparable private universities," says Rice President Malcolm Gillis, adding that more than 80 percent of the student body

receives financial aid. "We remain committed to affordable education and to moderation in tuition growth."

Currently, Rice University ties their tuition increases into the nation's Consumer Price Index, which normally rises no more than 3 percent each year. This year's tuition at the Houston institution is \$10,400 per year.

The remaining schools in the top 10 were: Trenton State College in Trenton, N.J.; State University of New York-Binghamton; Northeast Missouri State University in Kirksville, Mo.; Hanover College in Hanover, Ind.; Rutgers-New Brunswick, N.J.; California Institute of Technology in Pasadena; Spelman College in Atlanta; and St. Mary's College in St. Mary's City, Md.

Spelman College in Atlanta was ranked ninth on this year's list, up from 17th in 1993. Spelman, one of only two surviving historically black colleges for women in the country, was able to keep its tuition at last year's level, thanks to a recent influx of endowments that includes a \$20 million package from Bill Cosby.

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