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The Gamecock Weekend & Entertainment Section

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All Aboard for Fun Time

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'THE MATRIX' DAZZLES CRITICS WITH EFFECTS

Lights, Camera, Reaction
Out of four stars ****

A computer hacker, Neo (Keanu Reeves), discovers that all life on Earth could be nothing more than an elaborate facade created by a malevolent cyber intelligence. He joins rebel warriors Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) in their struggle to overthrow the Matrix.

Written and directed by the Wachowski brothers.

by Katy Evans
Gamecock Critic ****

You wake up in the morning, get dressed, go to class, eat, take a nap, maybe go out partying, then fall asleep, only to wake up the next day and repeat the cycle. To you, this is real life, but to those who understand the Matrix, it is only a dream world.

Written by the Wachowski brothers and starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, Carrie-Anne Moss and Hugo Weaving, "The Matrix" is a clever, thought-provoking and ingenious piece of filmmaking. It tells the story of Neo (Reeves), a computer addict who has spent the past two years searching for an answer to the question: What is the Matrix? Only Morpheus, a legend believed to be the most dangerous human alive, can help him.

Simply asking the question has placed Neo in grave danger from the Agents, the Matrix's law enforcement. If he truly wants to find answers, he must accept the consequences of never returning to the life he has known

and taking on responsibilities far beyond anything we could imagine.

After suffering a long, slow process of induction, Neo is finally shown the truth. The world we live in is the Matrix. It's an intricate computer program that controls our destiny without us knowing. It was created to hide the real purpose for the human race: to sustain a giant computer network in another reality.

Morpheus and his team are some of the only surviving humans who live outside the Matrix, in the real world. Morpheus teaches Neo that everything is controlled by the mind. Anything can be learned just by downloading a computer program into your brain, such as kung fu, jujitsu or how to fly a helicopter.

The plot is compelling, but it's the computer graphics and use of photography that make "The Matrix" so impressive from a visual perspective. One of the camera techniques used creates the impression of motion and stillness at the same time. The technique makes Neo and the Agents appear to dodge flying bullets. A similar visual technique is used in Korn's "Freak on a Leash" video.

This film impressed me, and I'm not usually a sci-fi fan. Although the subject matter is serious, it has moments of humor—for example, the martial-arts fight scene between Neo and Morpheus which resembles something out of "Street Fighter."

"The Matrix" is a must-see, it will make you view life through new eyes.

by Rob Lindsey
Gamecock Critic ****

In the tradition of sci-fi noir ("Blade Runner," "Jacob's Ladder," "The Crow,"



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From left: Matt Doran, Carrie-Anne Moss, Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne and Belinda McClory star as a team of rebels in "The Matrix."

"Dark City"), "The Matrix" significantly ups the ante in the special effects department, while at the same time lowering the acting bar on what has been a fairly respectable sub-genre. In the case of "The Matrix," however, the effects, the Wachowski brothers' direction and an intriguing, mysterious plot make up for the lead actor's lack of talent.

Keanu Reeves stars as only Keanu can. His valley-twined "Bill and Ted" delivery is ever-present as he attempts to give the audience every shade and nuance of what, in other hands, could have been a vastly intriguing character. Instead, he manages to invest Neo, a super-hacker who may or may not be "the chosen one" of a desperate, futuristic society, with about as much conviction as an O.J. jury. True, in the second half of the film, dialogue and acting ability don't matter nearly as much as how much you can kick, but with a more capable actor, the first half of the film wouldn't have been so mediocre.

Aside from Reeves' lackluster performance, this film is definitely one any sci-fi fan should see, especially if you liked last year's "Dark City," but

Without giving too much away, the plot is basically this: A resistance force from the future (led by Laurence Fishburne in an odd yet apt casting move) recruits Reeves because he might be "the one" they need to lead them to victory. Against whom and for what cause, you'll have to see the film to find out.

The supporting cast, including Fishburne, is very solid. It is quite surprising to see him and Reeves spar at breakneck speed in one of the many martial-arts action sequences. Another standout performance is turned in by Hugo Weaving, who plays the evil Agent Smith. His character seemed a little too "X-Files" at first, but when the guy in the suit starts in on the same lightning-fast martial arts moves as the heroes, you know it's something different all together.

The script, written by the Wachowski brothers, is intelligent and well-paced, referencing everything from "Alice in Wonderland" to "The Wizard of Oz," from the Bible to Zen Buddhism. It's rare to find a sci-fi movie that actually plays like a novel instead of a shoot-'em-up action fest (not to say that action is lacking in "The Matrix," but



Special to the Gamecock

Keanu Reeves stars as Neo, a computer hacker and potential savior of humanity in Warner Bros.' "The Matrix."

it has a purpose and is executed with a style rare in the sci-fi genre).

Andy and Larry Wachowski also direct the film with the same sure-handed, distinctive approach that put them on the Hollywood A list with their debut film, "Bound." This time, however, they have the big budget of a major studio behind them. As a result, the special effects for this film are astounding. Several techniques were invented

just for this movie, including a sequence in which Reeves and an agent dodge each other's bullets in super slow motion.

"The Matrix" was originally intended as the first film of a trilogy, and the ending is open enough for this to be a distinct possibility. If the film's box office gross is high enough, keep an eye out for a "Matrix Part II."

Tragic end for writer

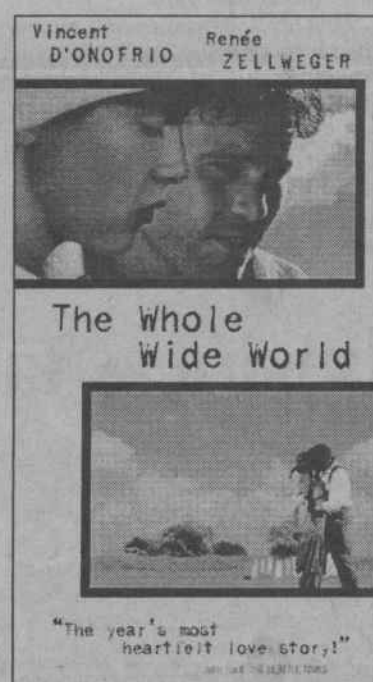
by Chris Richter
The Richter Scale *

When I was little, I used to collect comic books. I never really read them; instead, I just looked at the pictures and put together my own stories. One of my favorites was "Conan" and its various spinoffs. I was always enamored by the monsters, bloodthirsty warriors and scantily clad women. It wasn't until a couple of years ago that I learned the comics were based on stories by pulp legend Robert E. Howard. Raised in a sparsely populated pocket of Texas, he created characters as if he were recording them as they roamed the empty landscape of his home state.

The video pick of the week is "The Whole Wide World" (1996), starring Vincent D'Onofrio as Robert E. Howard and Renee Zellweger as Novalyne Price, a local schoolteacher and the object of Howard's affection. Based on Price's book "One Who Walked Alone," the film tells the story of the romance between the two. The legend of Robert E.

Howard, the writer, had spread, and Price, an aspiring writer, longed to meet this published author. A notorious recluse, Howard was devoted to his mother (Anne Hedgeworth) and did all of his writing in his room in his parents' home. After being given the runaround by Mrs. Howard, Price comes to visit Howard. She is intrigued by his writing, specifically by the performance of the story as he writes. She begins to spend time with Howard and quickly realizes that he lives in his own world. At the center of this world is his mother, and at times, their relationship appears to have Oedipal tinges. Price has a hard time dealing with this. She understands other people because she lives in the "real world." Howard lived his life in a fantasy world, where his "yarns" were his experience. He does not know how to treat Price, sometimes being charming and Jimmy Stewart-ish, at other times being cruel and callous. Price knows Howard is an incredible person but cannot make him understand that other people matter. This inability to live in the real world and his attachment to his mother lead to the film's, and the relationship's, tragic end.

D'Onofrio gives a terrific performance as Howard. An underrated actor, he will play Abbie Hoffman in the film "Abbie!" due out later this year. Zellweger, in a pre-"Jerry McGuire" film, turns in a strong portrayal of a



"The year's most heartfelt love story!"

small-town woman caught at a crossroads in life. The film is not overly sentimental, a problem characteristic of too many dramas and romances. Instead, it chooses to look at the relationship as it was: loving but difficult and tragic. A neat touch the director, Dan Ireland, throws in is the sound effects when Howard is writing. You hear the clashing of swords and the yelling of men, as if you were put right into Howard's mind during the creative process.

Dayroom showcases new diversity on 'Better Days'

by Katie Rowen
Gamecock Critic **** 1/2

Dayroom's third album, *Better Days*, is an impressive combination of diverse and multilayered songs. Members Michael Winger (vocals, guitar, principal lyricist), Jimmy Riddle (keyboard, samples, vocals, lyricist), Ryan Kelly (bass, vocals) and Brad Zimmerman (drums) have each contributed their talents to an enjoyable and respectable album.

The first track, "Not Enough," grabs you with a strong combination of guitar and drums, and Winger's distinctive voice takes you into the song. "Not Enough" is the first single off *Better Days*, and though it is not the album's best song, it has catchy lyrics and is radio-friendly.

The album's title track exhibits Zimmerman's steady percussion as the song switches beats. Winger reveals another pitch to his voice and is

admirably backed up by Riddle and Kelly.

"Stranded" is one of the best songs on the album. With near-perfect transitions, one of Dayroom's strong points, and Winger's particularly smooth voice, "Stranded" has the capability of being a hit.

The lyrics of "Til I Die," the album's only love song, are mainly touching and heartfelt.

This is not surprising, considering Winger wrote it for band member Kelly's wedding. The chorus, however, borders on annoying. Jump, Little Children's Ward Williams provided the cello solo in a very pretty song, despite minor glitches.

Perhaps the most catchy song on the album, "Truth," blends memorable lyrics and at times chaotic instrumentals to create an awesome song.

"Fine" wins the award for most unique opening, which sets the tone for the rest of the song. It is a psychedelic trip with insane lyrics, in-

cluding the best chorus on the album, and unique sounds from the instruments.

A song that makes its transitions from melodic to angry, "Crazy" is a showcase for the diversity of Winger's voice, as well as for Riddle's keyboard playing.

"Day by Day" is Dayroom's answer to the swing phenomenon. The rhythm is bouncy and catchy, and Riddle has created a more enjoyable song than his other track, "Condo."

Dayroom somewhat loses its uniformity on "Goodbye." The song seems off and not smoothly pulled together. Though each element is impressive, their combination is confusing.

The last two songs on the album, "Maybe" and "Postcards From a Midwestern Salesman," can only be described as poignant. The lyrics in "Maybe" have the capability to bring a tear to one's eye, and "Postcards" is touching. With its lyrics of a lonely man's solace, it brought to mind Otis Redding's "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay."

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Faculty (R)	9:00
Twin Dragons (PG-13)	1:50, 3:45, 5:40, 9:30
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Forces of Nature (PG-13)	2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:35
Mod Squad (R)	1:55, 4:10, 7:00, 9:45
The Corrupter (R)	2:05, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25
Doug's 1st Movie (G)	2:00, 3:50, 5:35, 7:20
Cruel Intentions (R)	3:10, 5:35, 7:35, 9:40
Matrix (PG-13)	1:45, 4:30, 7:10, 9:45

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