



THE MIX

CONTACT US

Story ideas? Questions? Comments?
E-mail us at gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

THEY SAID IT

ISAAC ASIMOV: "I do not fear computers. I fear lack of them."



Folk legend Tom Waits releases newest material in more than two years

The essential Tom Waits

- Closing Time (1973)
- Small Change (1976)
- 'One from the Heart' Soundtrack (1982)
- Swordfishtrombones (1983)
- Rain Dogs (1985)
- Bone Machine (1992)
- Mule Variations (1999)



Tom Waits songs that you didn't know you knew

(Covers by other artists)

- THE EAGLES "Ol' 55"
- BETTE MIDLER "Shiver Me Timbers"
- BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN "Jersey Girl"
- ROD STEWART "Downtown Train"
- THE RAMONES "I Don't Wanna Grow Up"
- BOB SEGER "16 Shell From a Thirty-Ought Six"



TOM WAITS CD REVIEWS



"ALICE"
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆



"BLOOD MONEY"
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY TUG BAKER
THE GAMECOCK

America has its fair share of folk heroes. From Tom Sawyer to Johnny Appleseed, folk tales of Americana have always managed to reflect some kind of ideal, underdog existence the

country craves. While such tall tales were prominent in the past, there seems to be no new American myth. Until someone discovers Tom Waits, that is.

From the empty landscape of music in the early 1970s, a unique voice of America emerged. Unlike most other

music being made at the time, Waits' music came straight from a bar stool. Like some kind of Bohemian junkyard dog, he crafted songs of women, murder, booze and long-lost love. His songs, a combination of jazz, folk and blues, garnered critical acclaim and a cult following.

Creation of a myth

Waits' own beginnings are muddled. It is widely believed that he was born in the back seat of a taxi in a small town outside of Los Angeles. However, there is also a story that, when he was born, he jumped up, smacked the nurse on the bottom and asked in a gruff voice, "What's a guy have to do to get some whiskey around here?" Which is the truth? Well, Waits isn't telling.

What is known is that, after becoming a follower of the beat movement in 1967, Waits moved out to Los Angeles to become a singer/songwriter. Before reaching anything close to "rock

'n' roll" stardom, Waits got a taste of rock-star life while living at the Tropicana Motel in West Hollywood, known for such infamous guests as Andy Warhol and Rickie Lee Jones.

Leaving this debauchery, Waits released his first album, "Closing Time," on Asylum Records in 1973. Even though he was only 24 at the time, "Closing Time" was an incredibly mature album. It was most noted for "Martha," a ballad sung from the perspective of an old man calling his childhood sweetheart.

Glass and gravel

Eight years and seven albums later, Waits switched musical gears and changed to Island Records.

"Swordfishtrombones" (1983) featured less and less of the smooth jazz piano that marked Waits' time at Asylum and more low-pitched horns and off-kilter bass. It was also on this release that Waits' already gruff voice

became something beyond gruff. Like glass crunched on gravel, Waits growled his way through songs about all of life's misfits. This song style remained intact throughout Waits' years at Island. This musical evolution culminated in 1999's Grammy-winning "Mule Variations," which was released on Epitath's imprint Anti and combined everything Waits had put into his years at Asylum.

These two different musical styles have led fans and critics alike to draw a distinction between the two bodies of work, denoting them as The Asylum Years and The Island Years.

'Alice'

With the simultaneous May 7 release of two albums, "Alice" and "Blood Money," Waits finds himself pulling equally from his years at Asylum and Island.

While both albums are a conglomeration of Waits' musical past, each is influenced by

different aspects, which makes them very different albums.

According to Waits' postings on Anti's Web site, "'Alice' is adult songs for children, or children's songs for adults. It's a maelstrom or fever-dream, a tone poem, with torch songs and waltzes ... an odyssey in dream logic and nonsense." "Alice" is immediately recognizable as traditional Waits, with a little something extra thrown in. What that inclusive ingredient is, though, remains a bit of a mystery.

According to the Web site, "Alice" was "the lost Tom Waits masterpiece," meant to be an avant-garde opera based on Lewis Carroll and his pedophilic obsession with Alice Liddell, the inspiration for his "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass." The lyrics are, appropriately enough, concerned with dark longings and bittersweet trysts. The

◆ WAITS, SEE PAGE 6

MOVIE REVIEWS

'Lanes' makes all the right turns

"CHANGING LANES"
Starring Samuel L. Jackson, Ben Affleck
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY ADAM MCALLISTER
THE GAMECOCK

Despite what Hollywood wants us to think, modern morality plays are a thing of the past. Gone are the films of one man struggling with himself. They still seem to be in theaters nationwide, but now such hackneyed plots are over-developed, over-hyped and over-cooked.

But there is still some small hope, and part of that hope lies in Paramount Pictures' latest release, "Changing Lanes."

"Changing Lanes" follows the day of two men who are neither bad nor necessarily good — they're just men. As their lives intersect in a traffic accident on a New York City highway, they find themselves at a crossroads. One path can take them the easy way, one the hard, and, in movies, they always choose the hard. As Gavin Banek (Ben Affleck) leaves the scene of the accident, Doyle Gibson (Samuel L. Jackson) is left wondering how the rest of his day will play out, what to do about his insurance, and most importantly, what he will do about missing his children's custody hearing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Samuel L. Jackson, left, stars as Doyle Gibson and Ben Affleck as Gavin Banek in "Changing Lanes."

But Banek, who is also on his way to court to deliver an important file, dismisses the incident for his career's sake. The only problem is that the file was left at the accident, and his career is at stake if he cannot get it back.

What follows is a classic example of dramatic one-upmanship, with each man attempting to get something back: one a document and one his time. The script shows each man's downfall and redemption as they face unswerving pressure and seemingly endless threatening

situations, including car wrecks, credit fraud and jailed parents. The film also serves as a fantastic acting vehicle for both Affleck and Jackson, who get a solid chance to showcase their characters' vulnerability. Affleck, in particular, comes through with surprises as he breaks away from his previous sleepwalking roles and creates a believable helplessness that we haven't seen from him in years. Jackson proves why he

◆ LANES, SEE PAGE 6

Diaz can't uplift vapid screenplay

"THE SWEETEST THING"
Starring Cameron Diaz, Christina Applegate, Selma Blair
★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY DAVID GERMAIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women now have a gross-out comedy of their own.

"The Sweetest Thing" proves that a lowbrow chick flick can be just as cretinous as a big dumb guy movie (excluding anything by Tom Green).

"Rollerball" already has it beat for worst movie so far this year, but "The Sweetest Thing" has the early lead for most vapid.

You'd think the usually winsome Cameron Diaz could phone in her role and still lift a comedy into the tolerable range. This time out, Diaz actually is upstaged by co-star Christina Applegate, who wangles a few laughs out of material so empty it would be lavish praise to call it vegetative.

Talented co-star Selma Blair, however, winds up the Jason Biggs, "American Pie"-style patsy of some pathetically lame sex sight gags. (Director Roger Kumble, who worked with Blair on "Cruel Intentions," notes that the actress will do anything in a role; Kumble means it as a compliment, but Blair may want to re-evaluate her work ethic given the results here.) Diaz plays Christina Walters, a brash, lusty woman whose



Cameron Diaz, left, and Christina Applegate star in "The Sweetest Thing." Selma Blair also co-stars and is reunited with director Roger Kumble, who worked with her on "Cruel Intentions." Despite big names, Germain says the "gross-out comedy" falls to "lift a comedy into a tolerable range."

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

love-'em-and-leave-'em attitude deposits the carcass of many a woebegone suitor behind her. Christina is introduced through pseudo-interviews with failed aspirants to her affections. The sequence is mildly amusing, though it's a cheesy knockoff of the far cleverer talk-to-the-camera confessionals occasionally used by "Sex and the City," a show that has more smarts, heart and humor in one pedicured toenail than "The Sweetest

Thing" has in its whole cadaver. After that opening, the movie declines into mind-numbing prattle and imbecilic bathroom or bedroom slapstick as Christina and gal pals Courtney (Applegate) and Jane (Blair) giggle and jiggle through the joys of noncommittal passion. "Don't go looking for Mr. Right. Look for Mr. Right Now."

◆ SWEETEST, SEE PAGE 6