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THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

BILL CLINTON: "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured with what is right in America."

MOVIE REVIEW

Hanks, Newman walking road to Oscar in 'Road to Perdition'



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Tom Hanks and Tyler Hoechlin star as father and son in Dreamworks Pictures' "Road to Perdition."

ROAD TO PERDITION

Starring Tom Hanks, Paul Newman and Jude Law

★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY TUG BAKER

THE GAMECOCK

A couple months ago, the nation was abuzz with anticipation for the comic-book-turned-movie "Spider-man." Now that the wall-crawling clamor has died down, it's time for another so-called funny book-film to take its place in the summer blockbuster race. If you're expecting a review of "Reign of Fire" to follow, you're mistaken.

Based on a graphic novel written by Max Allan Collins and illustrated by Richard Pier Rayner, "Road to Perdition" is not a typical superhero-in-spandex comic. Taking the challenge to take the story from paper to film is director Sam Mendes, whose only other time as director ("American Beauty") snatched up Oscars left

and right, including Best Director and Best Picture.

Mendes, with lots of help from Academy Award-winning cinematographer Conrad Hall, transports filmgoers to 1931 and creates a tragedy of Greek proportions told within the confines of mobster life in middle America.

Tom Hanks stars as Michael Sullivan, a hit man working for a Rock Island offshoot of the Chicago mob. John Rooney (Paul Newman) is his boss and also a surrogate father figure for Michael.

As Rooney points out in the film, "sons only exist to cause their fathers trouble." This trouble is introduced by 12-year-old Michael Sullivan Jr. (Tyler Hoechlin) and bloodthirsty Conner Rooney (Daniel Craig).

Curious about his father's job, Michael Jr. tags along on one of his dad's "missions," without his father's knowledge. Conner kills a man in cold blood while Michael

Jr. watches. After discovering the peeping Sullivan, Conner decides that the boy poses a threat. The story takes off from there, leading to a six-week period where the two Sullivans become a father and son vigilante-outlaw duo.

The rewrite of the original story by screenwriter David Self is servicable, adding some improvements and making some mistakes: sometimes it takes too long to fill the audience in on what's happening.

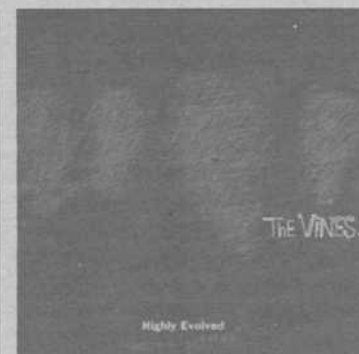
While the story is gripping and moving, it would be nowhere near as satisfying without the masterfully composed shots by Hall. Rain falls hard on gun-toting trenchcoats, and it's so beautiful that one hardly notices the bodies lying in the street.

"Road to Perdition" showcases some fine performances. Hanks, as always, is astounding as yet another revamp of the everyman.

♦ PERDITION, SEE PAGE 8

CD REVIEW

The Vines evolve to grunge harmonies

**HIGHLY EVOLVED**

The Vines

★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY WILLIAM MILLS

THE GAMECOCK

Although they might look like every other New York band riding on the coattails of the gritty garage rock revival, The Vines are perking ears to a sound that is, ironically, both new and used.

This Australian foursome recently released their first full-length album, "Highly Evolved," under a blanket of Beatle-esque, dreamy harmonies and a strong dose of Seattle grunge. If Nirvana and the "Fab Four" mated, something like The Vines would emerge from the gene pool.

Don't let songs like the MTV hit "Get Free" fool you; these Aussies aren't all about rocking out in a rough way. However, they do throw in a little hint of the same garage rock sound that is hitting so hard right now.

Lead vocalist and guitarist Craig Nicholls has a voice that invokes the harmonious melodies of the Beatles threaded together with grunge guitar work.

Nicholls crisscrosses his hard rock howls with '60s harmonies that take turns with every other song. It's amazing how The Vines jump from a faster, grungy '90s

rock sound to the '60s British invasion and, somehow, pull it off smoothly.

The release of "Highly Evolved" is not The Vines' first exposure in America. Listeners might remember them from the "I Am Sam" soundtrack, an album composed entirely of Beatles songs covered by various artists. The Vines covered "I'm Only Sleeping."

Although songs like "Country Yard" and "Homesick" sound an awful lot like something off of "Revolver," the lyrics seem to be lacking the passion and poetry of the Beatles.

The amount of imagery and symbolism expressed in the lyrics of "Highly Evolved" could be contained in a thimble.

"Highly Evolved" might be their first ever full-length album, but a slew of 7 inches and singles from these down-under rockers have been floating around in Australia and the UK for years. They broke first in these areas before making the jump to MTV.

Success in Europe before hitting the American market is something that is becoming all too popular among current rock acts like the Strokes, Hives, and these hard rockin' Aussies.

One reason for their slow change in latitude is due to The Vines' reluctance to allow their music to be overly produced, a phenomenon that is very common to American pop.

Although their lyrics are dry and uninspiring, having influence from two of the biggest rock and roll pioneers is somewhat redeeming. Overall, "Highly Evolved" is a strong rock album that mixes an old sound with a totally new band.

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