

# A feast of faiths



## INTERFAITH PANEL DISCUSSES RELIGIOUS VIEW OF WAR AND PEACE

BY ELEANOR SIBOL  
THE GAMECOCK

In a panel discussion Wednesday, leaders from six faiths summarized their religious views on war.

Represented at "War and Peace: Six Religious Perspectives," sponsored by USC's Interfaith Council, were Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Baha'i, Presbyterianism and Unitarian Universalism.

Sheima Salam, a coordinator for the event, thinks the panel discussion helped illuminate views on the war that are different from mainstream beliefs.

"Especially now that the Iraqi war is pending, we need religious leaders to speak out on what they believe," she said. "And especially with many

religious leaders contacting the government and taking an active role, the Interfaith Council just wanted to offer them more of a forum to express their views about war in general, as well as the war that may be happening."

The Rev. Patrick Price, the Unitarian Universalist panelist, thinks it is always important to discuss matters of war and peace.

"It's an important topic to discuss at any time, given the nature of history and of human beings," he said. "I think universities are important places to discuss ideas of any kind, and I believe that examining the issues of violence, whether it is state-sanctioned or not, is important so we can look at how we resolve conflicts of any kinds."

Louis Venters, chairman of the local Baha'i community's administrative body, began the discussion by saying, "World peace is not just possible, but inevitable." Baha'i members believe that the very core of their religion rests in the will of God, that humanity will live in peace and harmony.

"Peace isn't just absence of conflict; peace must be fostered within the individual and within the family," said Surya Vasudevan, president of the Hindu Student Council.

During the question-and-answer

part of the event, Shendal Epstein, director of Jewish studies at the Columbia Jewish Day School, was asked whether the United States should have completed what it started in Iraq in the early

1990s. She answered that she honestly did not know.

"Five minutes is too short to convey the world's problems," Epstein said. "Peace is something we work toward on a daily basis, and in extreme cases, we go to war for it. Peace is seen as an ideal in

Hebrew."

William Ketteran, 23, said he appreciated Epstein's views but was not as impressed with some of the other panelists' speeches.

"I think that (Epstein) did the best in being real and honest to herself, the audience and the questions," he said. "It seemed to me that the Hindu, Baha'i and Muslim spoke mostly irrelevancies — they mostly gave generalities of their faiths."

Most of the representatives shared the same vision that humanity is all one people, that we are all connected to each other, and that the only way society can live peacefully is to unite.

"When we understand what we have in common," said Imam Omar Shahid of the Muslim faith, "why should we be jealous of each other, and why should we deprive one another? One is not a believer whose neighbor is not safe from him or her."

Vasudevan agreed: "One should accept the ideas of all religions. Religion is meant for humanity and not humanity for religion," he said.

After the panel discussion and question-and-answer session, at-



◆ FAITH, SEE PAGE 6

Above: From left, Surya Vasudevan, representing Hinduism; Shendal Epstein, Judaism; Imam Omar Shahid, Islam; Reverend John Cook, Presbyterianism; and Reverend Patrick Price, Unitarian Universalism, speak about the possible war in Iraq at the Interfaith Council panel discussion Wednesday night in the Russell House Ballroom. Left: Vasudevan, standing, said, "One religion should accept the ideas of all religions." The representatives advocated peaceful solutions based on their beliefs.

PHOTOS BY JOHN CARLOS/THE GAMECOCK

## Music world takes Manhattan

BY MEG MOORE  
THE GAMECOCK

Strike up the band!

The music industry's heavy hitters and hit makers will be waltzing down the red carpet Sunday as the 45th annual Grammy awards ceremony unfolds at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

After taking place in sunny Los Angeles for the past four years, the event is making its return to the Big Apple in style, promising a night of glamour, glitz and great performances.

The National Academy of

Recording Arts and Sciences is responsible for compiling the lengthy list of nominees in 104 categories. Entries can be submitted by Academy members — all of whom are industry professionals — as well as music-video companies and record labels, either major or independent, that have registered with the organization.

Qualified entries are then included on a ballot, which is sent out to voting members of the Academy and from which the nominees are generated. Votes are then again cast and tabulated to determine the winners, which are not revealed until the

awards ceremony.

The most publicized honors up for grabs at the Grammys are those included in the general field of awards. These include record of the year, album of the year, song of the year, and best new artist honors.

Grammys are also awarded in a number of genre-specific categories including pop, rock, rap, country, R&B and even polka.

Along with honoring the world's top performers, the awards ceremony recognizes those who work behind the

◆ GRAMMYS, SEE PAGE 6



From left, Ashanti, Avril Lavigne, Nelly, John Mayer, Neil Portnow, Cindy Lauper, Kenny Chesney, Jimmy Jam and Justin Timberlake pose at the 2003 Grammy Awards nominations news conference held at Madison Square Garden in New York.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

## CD REVIEW

### Damone's rock too bubblegum



"FROM THE ATTIC"

Damone

★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY COREY GARRIOTT

THE GAMECOCK

Rock should alienate. Parents don't like rock. It shouldn't sound like an ecumenism council between liberal Protestants: "Can't we all just get along?"

But the first thing you notice about the up-and-coming Damone is how nice it is; it's because there's a girl singing in this here rock band.

This could be good. Female lead Shirley Manson was plenty evil, more than most male singers. But Damone's lead Noelle LeBlanc is too smooth — not harsh like Bif Naked, and much poppier than the Donnas.

Maybe she belongs in the Liz Phair category of sort-of-rock (but really pop). Except Phair is sexy. Well, whatever.

LeBlanc is the selling point in Damone's bubblegum rock. She's what matters, because the friend-

ly, semi-hard guitars and faithful backbeat aren't that special while bands like Weezer are touring. Some of the campaign literature wants to call them power-pop — but power isn't power if my sister would like it.

This is the same problem encountered when putting a female heroine in an action movie. Everyone knows she's not going to die. Not that action heropersons ever die, but since she's a girl, her punches and kicks have to be digitally enhanced to their most unbelievable. Forget robotic enhancements; superhumanity is Lara Croft.

Successful female leads in rock bands also have to have superhuman levels of testosterone (or estrogen, depending). LeBlanc's voice sounds more like a plaintive piano girl than the front for a rock band. This could work if it had a grind, screech, or growl, but she never really puts her voice into the music. As a placebo, the producers reverberate her voice, but it fails to make up for her performance.

The music itself drives through hooks and some interesting effects — until it gets repetitive, it's a lot of fun to listen to.

"At the Mall," which is about being at the mall no less, is sung by a male member of the band, and has, at first, an interesting guitar hook.

It's just that it doesn't improve on second listen — this music doesn't remain interesting after you've heard, "You're at the mall/and I'm missing you, miss-

ing you" for the 10th time.

"You and I" is also trying too hard to be rock. Apparently guitarist David Pino authored all of these songs to get back with his ex-girlfriend, meaning that LeBlanc has to switch the gender on most of the lyrics.

For instance, the word boyfriend switched genders in "Your girlfriend treats me so unfair/Your girlfriend points at me and stares," and she sings it like she means it.

The minor chords that open "Leave Me Alone" come too late in the album; they might wake you up from the formulaic easy listening of the first few tracks. In fact, this last one makes the album worthwhile. Good music ages well, and you ought to understand the melody better on the 10th listen than the first. Damone peters out near the second.

Female leads have always had a sort of sadomasochistic undertone to their music; it's a woman, and she's powerful, get it? We're not listening to harder styles of music to be let down easy. LeBlanc is obviously a capable singer, but she should experiment more to break out of a lackluster vocal style.

The first song, "Frustrated, Unnoticed" is representative. It begins with a spacey reverberation of her voice. Guitars ring in and her voice sways to the melody. But then the song does it twice more, and similar techniques are used throughout the album.

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