

SHOW AND CD REVIEW

Band loses its energy on 'Home'



"TAKE ME HOME"
Weekend Excursion
★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY DENNIS MING NICHOLS
THE GAMECOCK

Behind the smokestack inside Senate Park, you might have seen Weekend Excursion performing Saturday night.

This Raleigh-based ensemble has been together since high school, and it has been playing the same rock for years. While its live performance is great, Weekend Excursion's latest album does not

do justice to its energy onstage.

Most of Weekend Excursion's material is run-of-the-mill, hook-laden rock with little change in dynamics and tempo. But vocalist Sam Fisher brings power to the performance; in fact, all the group's members sing well.

But, with the exception of the soul-influenced vocals, Weekend Excursion sounds like a mix between a mellow Three Doors Down and the kind of feel-good rock you would hear at the prom.

If you are a fan of modern-rock bands such as Nickelback, Trust Company and Chevelle, Weekend Excursion's latest CD, "Take Me Home," would be a fitting addition to your pseudoalternative album collection.

The music on "Home" sounds overproduced and more like easy listening, a departure from the band's more exciting live performance. The individual songs are short and powerful, but the album as a whole does not build to any sort of pinnacle. Each song sounds like the song before it. Even

though each track is well-composed, the overstimulation of catchy power-pop anthems might leave the listener bored.

Thankfully, Weekend Excursion has an intriguing stage show. Guitarist Chris Groch, though lacking the technical chops of a guitar god, will make you smile with his insane rock-star poses. Fisher looks like the lovable street-side bum with his beanie cap and ripped jeans.

The highlight of Saturday evening came at the end of the band's performance with one of its famous medleys. For its last song, the band played a rock version of Outkast's "Bombs Over Baghdad" and fused it with the guitar solo from Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Freebird." So, even if you are not a fan of the band's studio albums, Weekend Excursion's stage show can be, at the least, entertaining.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

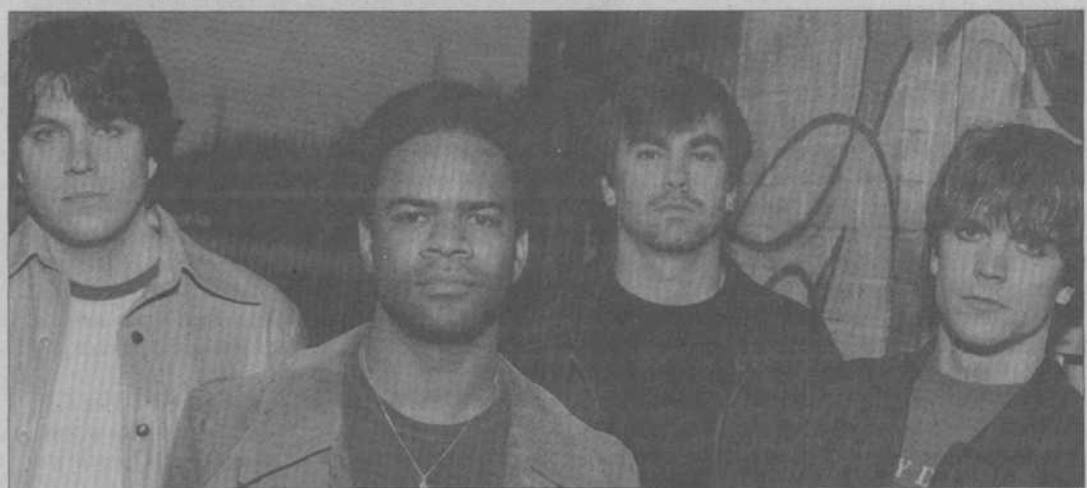


PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Weekend Excursion's live shows are energetic and entertaining, but the pseudoalternative music on its latest album, "Take Me Home," sounds more like what you might hear at the prom.

Book review

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symbol for happiness, then we might feel more sympathy.

In addition to writing five nov-

els, Baker has organized the American Newspaper Repository for the little journals we would otherwise toss away. So it's no surprise that Baker has dedicated his latest novel to the unglorified mundane.

But let's face it. This is 200

pages of mundane. If you want 100 pages of mundane as well as the prose that can hold them together, try "The Body Artist," by Don DeLillo.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

MOVIE REVIEW

Self-righteousness dooms film

"THE LIFE OF DAVID GALE"

Starring Kevin Spacey and Kate Winslet
★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY COREY GARRIOTT
THE GAMECOCK

Why, Kevin Spacey, why? Why do you disappoint us with your self-righteousness? "The Life of David Gale" could have been a clever flick. But ever since you started hanging out with Bill Clinton, you haven't been able to let a Hollywood think film go by without playing the intellectual.

Besides, "The Life of David Gale" is too snotty to start with. Public intellectual David Gale (Spacey) is the brain star of a romantically disorganized death-penalty protest group in Texas. His ideological opponent is the Southern-speaking, Bible-quoting, smart-aleck Texas governor.

Gale, of course, loses arguments only because the governor's stupid, down-home charm defeats Gale's big ego. In fact, all the death-penalty advocates in this movie are some form of white trash or otherwise Southern-fried ignoramuses; at various points, they are quoted on TV interviews reciting appropriately ridiculous dogma.

Gale, in cruelly obvious irony, is framed for murder and finds himself on death row. One is led to suspect the very same right-wing nut jobs, although it becomes evident that they are too stupid to accomplish the crime. In fact, this smart little mystery disengaged my gag reflex and gently redeems the second half of the movie.

Well, almost. Main character Kate Winslet, just to make Spacey more intolerable, plays a magazine reporter named Elizabeth Bloom, who must have Tourette's syndrome; she gasps and shrieks and sobs every time she puts two and two together in the never-ending plot twists.

Winslet cries the same way those wind-up chattering teeth



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Kevin Spacey, as a death-penalty opponent who gets framed for murder, is downright snotty in "The Life of David Gale."

work — she pumps her jaws in and out. Then she falls to her knees and grabs the air with her hands — why, cruel world, why?

The supporting cast, when it steals the spotlight from the interviews Bloom conducts with Gale, might be award-worthy. Rhona Mitra as Berlin, who disappears about 10 minutes into the script, seduces Gale in a very, very good way.

Gale, thus discredited, is convicted for an inventive murder of fellow advocate Constance Hallaway, played by Laura Linney. This seems random, but it isn't, and he invites reporter Winslet to interview him before his penalty to explain everything to her.

She, of course, doesn't believe that he is innocent but is turned from her skepticism by the strength of his testimony.

Hallaway and another hard-left protester, Dusty (Matt Craven) appropriately convey the tragedy in political radicalism. It is in them that the film's mystery lies.

If only someone other than Winslet's character revealed it. It's like watching episodes of

"The Power Rangers" — you start rooting for the bad guys when the good guys are so lame.

My favorite, however, is Gabriel Mann, who plays Winslet's realistic intern sidekick Zack. Zack smokes, so he's got to be street tough, right?

He's the Greek chorus for Winslet and is the first to believe in Gale's innocence. Generally, he knocks the reporter whenever she goes too far out on a limb, such as when she espouses post-modern views about the truth or gets mad at his smoking. He also boots her along whenever she gets into another crying fit, which is a lot.

The problem is that Mann never plays alongside Spacey, so we don't get to see Spacey brought back to Earth, either. Spacey, therefore, gets free reign for his daring and effete critique of both capital punishment and the radicalism of the amnesty movement. Thank you, Spacey. You are a Bob Dylan for the theater. Insert finger firmly in throat.

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