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E-mail us at gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

ANTON CHEKOV: "The more refined one is, the more unhappy."

Best of the best student films

BY COREY GARRIOTT

THE GAMECOCK

Columbia has no hills to stand its name on like the bold, white Hollywood letters that loom over Los Angeles. But Hollywood is exactly what independent filmmakers want to avoid in their pursuit of an artistic vision.

However, they don't mind a little corporate backing. Kodak, Sony, Avid Technologies and Turner Entertainment will help USC's Media Arts program host more than 250 of them this week.

The University Film and Video Association, a professional organization for up-and-coming filmmakers, began its 57th annual conference Tuesday, and the public is

invited to all the proceedings.

A haven for student film, the UFVA uses corporate sponsorship to promote film and media education. It meets annually, publishes a journal and funds NextFrame, an international, student-run film festival.

"Graduate students at Temple University curate it," said Karla Berry, associate professor of media arts. "We screen it and, while attending the conference, members of the organization will judge the submissions."

The Nickelodeon Theatre had a special screening from the festival Monday night.

"The films that we screened were the best of last year's

NextFrame festival," said Anne Ranan, executive director of the Columbia Film Society, which founded and operates the Nickelodeon. "They pick the best student films from around the world."

Monday's last movie, *Contrabass*, was a finalist in last year's narrative category. *Contrabass* was shot by Anna Melikian, a student in the All Russian State Institute for Cinematography at Moscow. The movie selects short scenes in the tragicomic life of a musician who plays, and hates, an obscure bass instrument.

♦ FILM, SEE PAGE 9

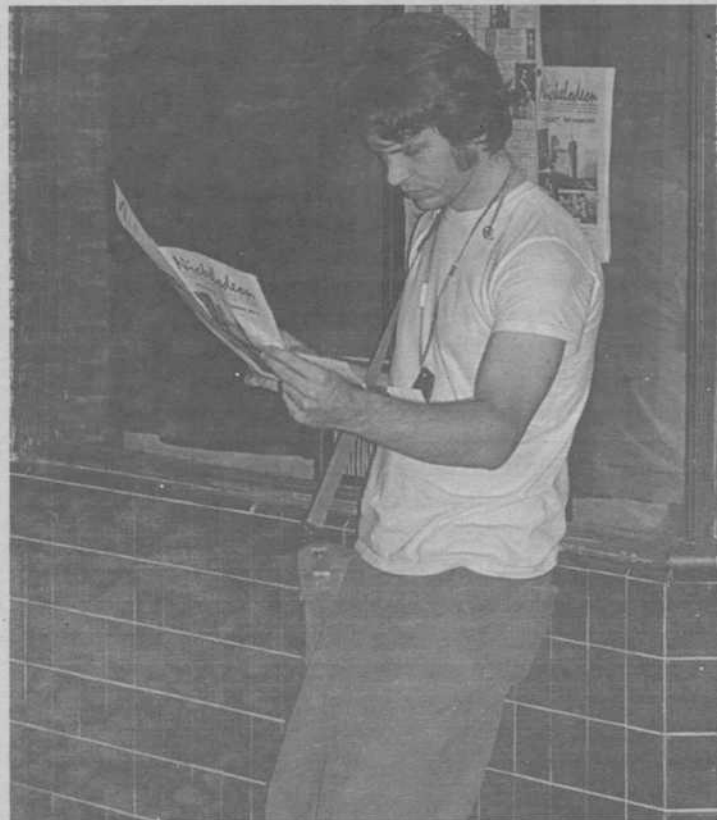


PHOTO BY TRISHA SHADWELL/THE GAMECOCK

USC graduate Mathew Parker reads the Nickelodeon calendar.

CD REVIEW

Mars Volta blends Latin, rock music



"DE-LOUSED IN THE COMATORIUM"

Mars Volta

★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY MICHAEL ARDAIOLO

THE GAMECOCK

Mars Volta's "De-Loused in the Comatorium" opens a window into the psychedelic funhouse of Cedric Bixler Zavala and Omar Rodriguez-Lopez.

Bixler and Zavala, members of

ex-band At the Drive In, have assimilated Latin beats, streaming guitar riffs and echoing vocals into this Santana-esque painting of rock 'n roll glory. The music develops a 60-minute story that follows the journey of childhood friend Julio Venegas through the dreams he experiences while comatose, his awakening and his ultimate suicide.

Welcome to your 21st century Led Zeppelin. This band pushes electronic-beat breakdowns, towering bongos and the elements of whatever genre happens to flow through its veins.

Opening with the introspective and mournful tones of "Inertial ESP" and "Roulette Dares," the music rolls into the (more upbeat?) "Drunkship of Lanterns,"

♦ MARS VOLTA, SEE PAGE 9

Bands fight for studio time

BY MEGAN TREASY

THE GAMECOCK

This July, New Brookland Tavern and Black Candle Management are hosting a monthlong Battle of the Bands.

"This is the first time we've ever done one with Black Candle Management and in this format," booking agent Jonathan Dunagin said. The venue will determine the winner through a voting format.

Everyone who came to cheer for a contestant Monday was handed a ticket with the power to praise or reject local bands competing for the prize of studio time. They were asked to write the name of the band they wanted to vote for once all the bands had performed. Each band had 30 minutes to perform four original songs.

"I expect everyone to do well. In a battle, bands typically do better than usual," Dunagin says.

Although Clayton Ravine was the only of the four scheduled bands to show up on July 14, the audience still had to officially vote for them in order for them to win that night's competition.

Out of 34 bands that applied, 16 were chosen. Four bands have waged musical war every Monday night for the past month. The winner from each week will go on to compete in the final show on Aug. 8.

The winner of the competition wins studio time for six songs, three at Sound Lab and three at Sound Servant Studios. The winner will also receive a cash prize that's based on the attendance over the four weeks. The winner will also get to play a full set the night of the final competition.

The December Tragedy, a five-member band from Florence competing on July 28, is excited about the exposure the competition will give them.

If you go

WHAT: Battle of the Bands

WHERE: New Brookland Tavern

WHEN: Monday, July 28 at 9 p.m.

BOX OFFICE: 791-4413

TICKETS: \$5

"It will give us good publicity and give us a chance to play for a lot of people who may have never heard of us," singer Justin Osbourne said. "We won't be discouraged if we lose because it will be a good experience regardless of the outcome. However, we really could use some free studio time."

The local band Guitar Show won Monday night's competition and will play in the final along with Clayton Ravine.

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