



THE MIX

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“Technological progress has merely provided us with a more efficient means for going backwards.”

ALDOUS HUXLEY
AUTHOR OF “BRAVE NEW WORLD” AND “THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION”

CD Reviews

‘Go’ strikes chord with rock fans

“AFTER WE GO”

Tantric
★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY MEG MOORE
THE GAMECOCK

In the seemingly static world of radio-ready rock, Tantric's latest release, “After We Go,” breaks no barriers. It's a collection of straight-ahead, post-grunge tunes in the vein of Nickelback and 3 Doors Down — groups that the band's breakout single “Breakdown” had to compete for airtime with. And like those groups, Tantric knows how to craft catchy-yet-edgy tracks that can win over mainstream fans and die-hard rockers alike.

The album opens with a full-on guitar assault — these guys don't let the listener to ease into things — establishing the band's rock credo right from the start. The first track, “Chasing After,” swells with layered, distorted guitars during the verses, breaking into a catchy chorus that highlights the deep-throated vocals; the



rest of the songs on the CD are similarly structured. Variety, clearly, is not the album's aim; but then again, this is mainstream rock.

Tantric does shake up the pattern a bit with tunes such as “Hero,” which breaks out an acoustic guitar for the intro, implying that even hard-rockers can have a sensitive side. The most intriguing offering, however, remains a cover tune. In a musical landscape dotted with Sheryl Crow's “The First Cut is the Deepest,” and Kid Rock's “Feel Like Making Love,” the fact that Tantric chose to include such a track is not surprising. The band's choice of song — and its unobnoxious

rendition of it — however, remain unique. Starting out with the same jangling guitar sound as the original and maintaining a reserve once the distortion kicks in, Tantric makes Fleetwood Mac's “The Chain” its own without destroying any of the tune's classic appeal.

“After We Go” evidences the band's penchant for playing with rhythm. Many of the tracks include syncopated drum licks, and “Change the World” even has somewhat of a waltzy feel.

The record might not include anything ground-breaking, but Tantric's latest effort is a sound collection of mainstream rock tunes, primed and ready to take the airwaves by storm. Like their ever-popular counterparts, Tantric understands that to stay in the business you have to give the listeners what they want. And if that means making tried-and-true rock tunes, then crank up the distortion and start wailing.

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Skelton EP ready for airwaves

ERIC SKELTON EP

★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY CELIA STEVENS
THE GAMECOCK

The new six-song release from Columbia native singer/songwriter Eric Skelton and his band is a solid, well-produced effort ready for radio play. Each track is composed of simple, catchy rhythms and mellifluous vocals that incite foot tapping and head nodding.

The 20-something singer/songwriter role is difficult to jazz up nowadays; it seems John Mayer and the like have maxed out the industry with raspy, “sexy” vocals coupled with acoustic chord progressions (and let's not forget the necessary tousled hair, just-tight-enough-but-not-Garth Brooks-tight jeans, pouty-lipped hopeless romantic image that almost supersedes the actual music).

In short, Eric Skelton wields a sound we've all heard before. His voice is similar to Eddie Vedder or Pete Dinklage, most often Rocky Votolato, at times Russell House Ballroom alumni Matt Nathanson and Howie



Day, or that circa-2001 band Lifehouse and even Chris Martin of Coldplay when Skelton utilizes falsetto on “Noel.”

Likewise, each song sort of mirrors the former: the lyrics are very average and trite, as in “Stay With Me,” (“Would you stay with me and make me better? All I know is who you are”).

However, the band retains a certain sincerity and sweetness amid the played-out motifs and redundant choruses. Nothing here is new or experimental by any means, yet this EP fares better than decent and highlights a proficient group with stories to tell and the will to put those stories to acoustic rock.

In the long run, it matters lit-

tle that Eric Skelton's style resembles that of others out there, because what he does, he does with excellence.

The first two songs of the album are perfect, upbeat pop rock — not surprisingly they were also the first singles to be released (you can request “Story of a Boy” and “Stay With Me” on 90.5 FM at 576-WUSC).

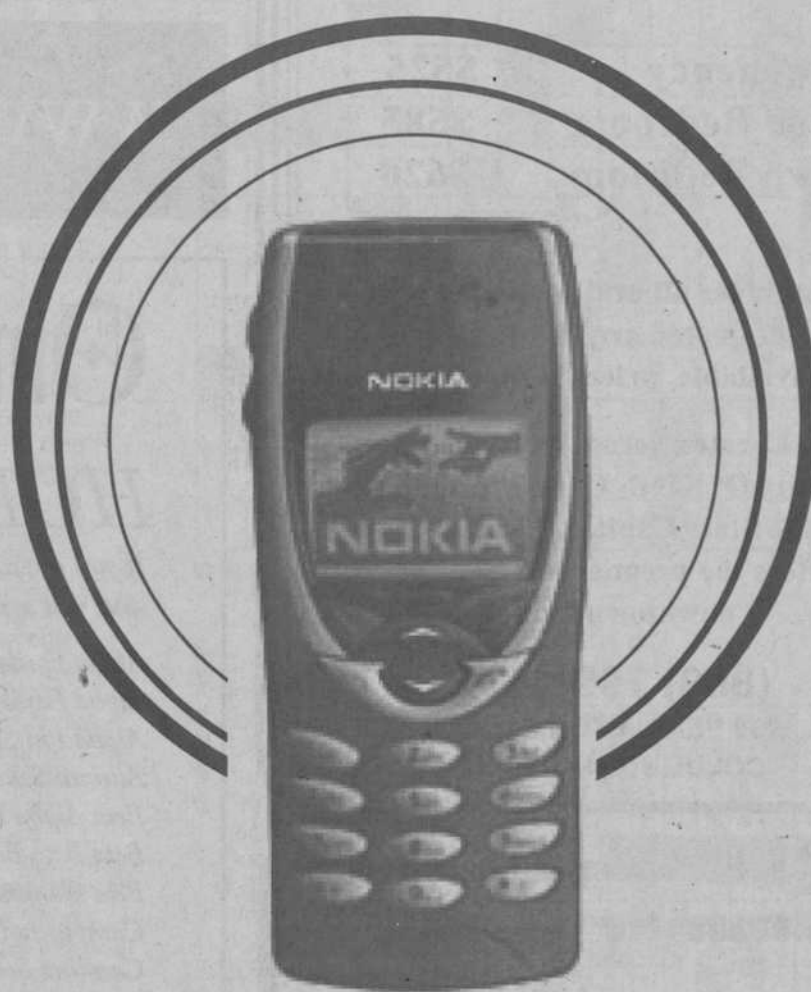
The third track, “Goodnight (I Don't Wanna Say I Don't Belong)” rounds off the first half of the EP — the more upbeat half — to be followed by three slower, sleeper “downer” songs.

“Downer” doesn't necessarily mean unlistenable, but “Dixie” proves to be the weakest track on the record, alluding to both shooting a man and breaking a heart in Dixie — which he manages to feel good and bad about. Hmm.

“Noel,” threatens to be an “our song” to hundreds of couples in Carolina with the opening line, “Did we dance under the stars on the streets of Charleston?” It's a sweet one, though, and bound to into fans.

The final song, “Bombs

♦ SKELTON, SEE PAGE 6



PHONING IT IN

Ring tones cross line from function to fad

BY EMILY LINSTROM
THE GAMECOCK

Some people still remember when cell phones were an exclusive trend. Nowadays, a person can, along with sending and receiving calls and messages, use his phone to access the Internet, download music, read e-mails and take photographs.

We've all experienced the weird sensation of sitting in a classroom or restaurant and suddenly being treated to a phone tones rendition of OutKast or the James Bond theme. The ringtone trend is catching on as fast as the cell phone itself, and many USC students aren't finding it that attractive.

“I think it's kind of cocky,” second-year English student Amanda Rose said. “It's like they're saying, ‘Hey, I have a cell phone.’ It's pretty supercilious.”

Ring tones are a means of defining one's identity, according to Venus Zine's Katie Hasty.

“Cell phone customization has slowly crept into the American obsession with personal identity, with some flying-fingered folks paying as much attention to phone aesthetics as they do the food that they put in their bodies,” she wrote.

According to the Edinburgh Evening

News, 65 million British pounds — roughly \$120 million — worth of music singles were sold in the UK, but 75 million pounds were spent on ring tones for mobile phones.

From movie themes to rap, classical and rock tunes, special ring tones can be downloaded in place of the standard and vibrate options.

The most laughable ring tones are the hip-hop excerpts, along the lines of 50 Cent and Ludacris, said second-year biology student Lauren Wishman. “People do it to show off,” she said. “Maybe they assume it will make them ghetto-fabulous.”

Online sources such as RingtoneMarket.com feature composers who claim to be able to write any ringtone song from scratch.

So is the ringtone fad an expression of one's personality or just an annoying alternative to the norm?

Second-year criminal justice student Blake Alexander said things are being blown out of proportion.

“It used to be creative and fun; now it's just silly,” he said. “Phones are a tool, not a fashion statement.”

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Movie Review

‘Eurotrip’ succeeds in bringing raunchy slapstick it promises

EUROTRIP

★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY LESLIE DENNIS
THE GAMECOCK

The producers of “Old School” and “Road Trip” bring audiences another sophomore comedy full of slapstick and sexual humor with “Eurotrip.”

Playing on stereotypical jokes about Europeans, the film plays out exactly as it is advertised: it contains no moral lesson or any deep meaning. From the opening credits, the audience knows “Eurotrip” promises crude humor and juvenile antics.

At his high school graduation, Scotty (played by the intriguing Scott Mechlowicz) is heartbroken when Fiona, his girlfriend (played by “Smallville's” Kristen Kreuk), ends their relationship, citing her infidelity and his “predictability.”

To cheer Scotty up, his best friend, Cooper (played by Jacob Pitts, an actor strangely reminiscent of a young David Spade), convinces Scotty to go on a trip to Europe to visit his German pen pal, Mieke.

While Scotty and Cooper are

supposed to be spending the summer working to build impressive resumes, they end up on a wild adventure involving wild sex clubs and crazed British soccer fans. Although Scotty's reason for going to Europe is to see his pen pal, Cooper plans to have the time of his life by engaging in wild European sex.

When the friends arrive in Europe, they decide to meet up with twins Jenny, a girl whom Scotty and Cooper have known since kindergarten, and Jamie, the geek with a travel guide and infinite knowledge of historical places (played by Michelle Trachtenberg and Travis Wester, respectively). As the lone female of the group, Jenny endures wisecracks about the lack of sex appeal she provides the boys. Comedy and mishaps ensue as the foursome travel around Europe trying to find Mieke.

The cameo by a pierced, skin-headed Matt Damon as the lead singer of a rock band who has an affair with Fiona provides viewers with a whole new look at the Oscar-winning star. Lucy Lawless, better known as Xena the Warrior Princess, also has a brief appearance as an Amsterdam dominatrix.

“Eurotrip” is a great movie for what it is supposed to be — a teen comedy about sex and friendship in the tradition of “American Pie.” Viewers should not expect a grand meaning to be revealed or a well-acted, sophisticated comedy. But for a simple release from the monotony of everyday life, “Eurotrip” affords the audience with a temporary suspension of politically correct society.

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“Eurotrip” delivers the crude humor expected from the producers of “Old School” and “Road Trip.”

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK