



THE MIX

“May you live to be 100 and may the last voice you hear be mine.”

FRANK SINATRA
AMERICAN SINGER

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CD Review

The Damnells deliver earnest roots rock with country edge



"BASTARDS OF THE BEAT"
The Damnells
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY MEG MOORE
THE GAMECOCK

More than mere "Bastards of the Beat" — the title of their latest effort — The Damnells have perfected a laid-back brand of rootsy music on their recent release. The 13-track record retains a raw-yet-polished quality, built upon country-tinged base lines and earnest vocals.

An album that opens with the line, "Everybody grew up to be assholes," will inevitably fall into one of two categories — the realm of copping-an-attitude garbage or that of ironic eloquence. In the

case of "Bastards of the Beat," the songs solidify The Damnells' place in the latter. The spare, acoustic opening track, "Assholes," establishes the band's honest, often-jangly approach to music making, which contrasts with the second tune, the album's most upbeat offering, "What You Get." The bouncy rocker is the closest the band gets to "rollicking" and the listener is left hoping for more full-on country-rock songs, only to be placated with an album of generally laid-back, well-crafted tracks.

Singer Alex Denzen's honest de-

livery crackles at the forefront of many of the tunes, his weathered voice often layered over subdued guitars and rudimentary percussion. Many of the tracks, such as "Newborn History" and "Sleepsinging," adopt the tried-and-true pattern of starting mellow and adding more instrumentation as they progress. Yet others retain a delicately raw sound — "I Will Keep the Bad Things from You" could be repackaged as an acoustic Wilco tune. The ironic — considering the song's sedate sound — refrain "Catch it while you can / it's the feel-good hit of

the summer" shimmers over the sound of pages turning as if the words are being read straight from the lyricist's notebook. On such deliciously mellow tunes, the listener almost forgets that the band has an obvious, if stifled, ability to rock out, but there remains that hanging "what if?"

The Damnells undoubtedly have the roots-rock thing down, having created a collection of melodic, country-edged cuts for their latest release. Yet the small taste of wide-open, juke joint rock the listener is given with "What You Get" keeps the CD from sound-

ing complete. Although mellow tracks such as "I'll Be Around" and the album's closer "TX" succeed at sounding tunelessly earnest, the distorted guitars that creep in on "The Sound" merely hint at an untapped heavier edge.

Perhaps a balance between the subdued and the unleashed is too much to ask for, but with the undeniable talent that "Bastards of the Beat" showcases, one gets the impression that The Damnells could tune up and conquer.

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PHOTO BY MORGAN FORD/THE GAMECOCK

John Edgerton, a second year English student, sifts through the CDs at Papa Jazz in Five Points. He is one of the many USC students who look to used CDs instead of downloading music.

BY CARRIE GIVENS
THE GAMECOCK

Have you become hesitant to download music since the Recording Industry Association of America filed lawsuits against college students attending Princeton, Michigan Technological University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute? Are you a little worried that you might be the next victim to fall prey to anti-piracy laws and copyright issues? Well, there is another viable option. And no, it does not amount to paying \$20 for a particular CD.

Many USC students opt to buy used music. It's cheaper, and, perhaps more importantly, it's legal. First-year marine science student Callie Van Koughnett said that about three-fourths of her music collection is comprised of used CDs. She said she buys used because it is more afford-

able and she doesn't "like to download because of copyright issues."

Although she normally shops at local music stores in her hometown of Knoxville, Tenn., she has bought music from the local Five Points store, Papa Jazz, because they "have a lot of different things and the prices aren't too bad," she said.

Third-year mathematics student Bruce Stoy has also bought used albums from Papa Jazz. He recalled that he "walked into Papa Jazz and they were there and it was cheap."

Stoy, who bought two CDs for \$11, said it was a good deal because it was the "same CD, in good quality, and cheaper." First-year biology student Rachel Bowman normally buys a used CD once a month, or whenever she's in Five Points. A Papa Jazz regular, Bowman said she enjoys their "great selection of titles you can't find in the chain stores."



A Tom Petty fan, Bowman was excited to find his first release at Papa Jazz, when she could not find it on the music racks of other stores. And the best part for Bowman remains the price. "Everything in there is a good deal," she said. CDs ranged "from six to 12 dollars and box sets from 12 to 14 dollars."

Some students new to buying used music CDs might worry about the condition

of the albums. Bowman, Van Koughnett and Stoy all speak highly of Papa Jazz's screening policy. Bowman remarked that she is "pretty confident that they will be in good condition although I do check for scratches."

Students can also pick up used music at Sounds Familiar on Rosewood Drive. Save money, listen to music legally, sup-

port local businesses — buying used is not such a bad deal.

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Depp cements star standing in Hollywood

BY BARRY KOLTNOW
KRT CAMPUS

Johnny Depp is in a confessional mood. He has just confessed that he didn't know what a movie star looked like until he watched "Gone With the Wind" for the first time.

"My 4-year-old daughter (Lily-Rose) watches the movie a lot, and I'm embarrassed to say that I had never seen it. So, when I stumbled into a room recently and found her watching it, I sat down and watched it with her.

"When it was over, I remember saying to myself, 'Boy, that Clark Gable is a real movie star.'"

Of course, there are those who would suggest that Depp look in a mirror if he wants to see a real movie star. But he would dismiss such a notion as utter nonsense.

Even after "Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl" passed the magical \$300 million mark at the box office, anointing him as the new King of Hollywood, and his peers seconded the nomination with a Screen Actors Guild award and an Oscar nod, Johnny Depp just doesn't get it. The 40-year-old actor, who successfully battled a deadly disease

called teen heartthrob-itis that threatened to strike him down during his stay on the TV show "21 Jump Street," and then fought off the possibility of commercial success in a 13-year, unbroken string of oddball film roles, is a movie star in spite of himself.

"I never wanted to build a movie-star career," Depp explained between puffs of an ever-present European cigarette in the presidential suite of the St. Regis hotel in Century City. "I don't even understand that kind of thinking."

"If anything, mine has been a career of failures. I think I'm getting all this attention right now because people feel sorry for me. I'm an underdog. Other actors look at me and think, 'That poor bastard

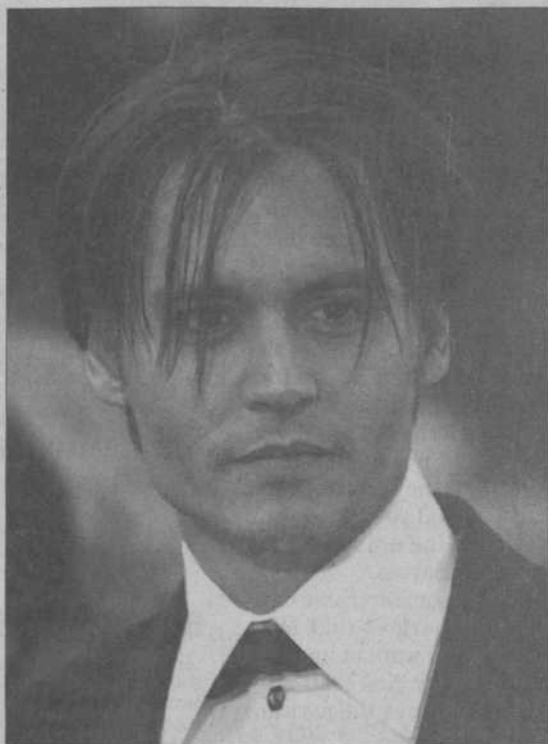


PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

After many years of starring in under-performing films, Johnny Depp celebrates his recent commercial success at the 2004 Oscars.

is still hacking away at it."

Depp, whose latest film, the Stephen King-inspired thriller "Secret Window," opened Friday, flew to the United States from his home in the south of France to attend the Academy Awards and to promote the new film, in which he plays a tormented writer living in an isolated cabin fighting writer's

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Movie Review

'Secret Window's' suspense lies in dynamic performances, not plot

"SECRET WINDOW"
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY LESLIE DENNIS
THE GAMECOCK

Movies based on Stephen King stories always promise to horrify and entertain; "Secret Window" is no different.

Riding on the success of the blockbuster "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Black Pearl," Johnny Depp proves to be a box office draw with "Secret Window," which was second in ticket sales over the weekend, behind "The Passion of the Christ."

Like, "The Shining," another King creation, "Secret Window" chronicles the experiences of a novelist, Mort Rainey (Depp), who, secluded from outside forces, grapples with writer's block.

The movie begins with a close-up of Mort sitting in his Jeep in front of a motel. After a few minutes of internal monologue, Mort rushes into one of the rooms to find his wife, Amy (Maria Bello), in bed with another man (Academy Award winner

Timothy Hutton). Upon discovering his wife's infidelity, Mort immerses himself in his work and shuts himself up in his cabin.

Six months later, an unkempt Mort, barely shaven and wearing

a moth eaten bathrobe, hears a loud bang at the door. The startling sound awakens Mort from one of his habitual daytime naps.

Mort answers the door to find a man with a black hat, John Shooter (John Turturro), who claims that Mort "stole his stow-

er."

Shooter has tracked down Mort in an attempt to have the end of his story rewritten to his satisfaction. At first, Mort believes Shooter to be a crazed reader who is just attempting to make a profit. But as the film progresses, Shooter begins his reign of terror over Mort's life.

Depp brings his unique style to the role. Adding idiosyncrasies and physical tics to Mort, Depp proves to be the compelling

force behind the movie.

The plot does sag sometimes and becomes bogged down in awkward silences, but Depp energizes the movie with quiet details, both physical and emotional, through his expressions and actions.

Turturro, a brilliant character actor seen in movies such as "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" and "Anger

Management," is perfect as Shooter, the frightening and extremely southern psycho. Bello, a relative newcomer who made her mark earlier this year in "The Cooler," also gives a great performance as the adulterous wife.

Though the plot becomes predictable at some points, "Secret Window" remains propelled by the great performances of the cast. "Secret Window" is a must see movie that provides a little bit of everything for everyone.

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