

New Music

for the week of October 11



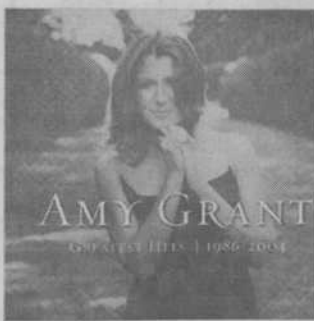
"Chuck" Sum 41



"Miracle" Celine Dion



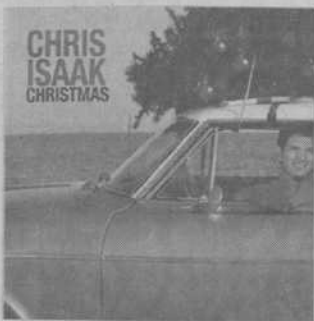
"Astronaut" Duran Duran



"Greatest Hits: 1986-2004" Amy Grant



"New Danger" Mos Def



"Chris Isaak Christmas" Chris Isaak

CONTROL

Continued from page 6

reporters on the scene in Baghdad, press briefings of U.S. military commanders and some fascinating behind the scenes give-and-take between Jazeera reporters and their American counterparts, the most interesting of whom is Lt. John Rushing, press officer at CentCom. The two people from Al-Jazeera that spend the most time on camera are reporter Hassan Ibrahim and Sameer Khader, a senior producer with the network.

Both men have a strong sense of irony and are jaded in a way that one might expect from people who have spent their lives covering events in the Middle East.

The movie makes it clear that the journalists at Al-Jazeera are by no means more objective than their American counterparts at ABC, CNN or Fox News. They're not even all that likeable onscreen. They can't help but watch the fall of Baghdad the way a Red Sox fan might watch a Yankees World Series victory parade.

But, on the other hand, Khader admonishes a subordinate for

scheduling an interview with an American political analyst who he feels is unfairly critical of U.S. policy. The overall conclusion is that they're doing the best they can to be objective for their audience.

By spending some time seeing the war through Arab eyes, we get some interesting takes on a few key events in the war, including who exactly was responsible for toppling that statue of Saddam in the Baghdad city square (hint, they might have been paid to do it), as well as why shots were fired at the Jazeera bureau in Baghdad, killing a correspondent (hint, it's a slightly different story than what we have heard).

Given the choice, Dubya and Cheney and the gang would much rather you go see the Moore picture than this one — "Control Room" is a lot harder to argue with. It's intellectually honest because it acknowledges that war is a confusing mess. Most importantly, it forces one to confront the fact that there is another side, and the people over on that other side aren't too terribly different than us.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockfeatures@gwm.sc.edu

R.E.M.

Continued from page 6

uncertainties and affirms fears, he retains a sense of innocence unaffected by two decades of celebrity.

Lyrical, the tunes on "Around the Sun" are introspective. Each track is constructed around a first-person narrative, contemplating failed relationships and searching for hope amid an often-confusing world. "I'm just a guy / I've got a story like everyone," Stipe insists on "Electron Blue."

His imperfect vocals and earnest words convey a comforting sense of awkwardness. In "Final Straw," he believably battles inner angst — "If hatred makes a play on me tomorrow / and forgiveness takes a back seat to revenge" — yet resolves to remain strong — "Now love cannot be called into question. Forgiveness is the only hope I hold / And love — love will be

my strongest weapon. I do believe that I am not alone."

"The Outsiders" proves to be the album's most experimental song — it includes an appearance by rapper Q-Tip. Throwing lines over a sparse, somber musical line, Q-Tip adds a unique touch to the end of the tune without attempting to turn it into a pump-the-bass rap finale.

Turning a cliché string of "Yeahs" into an almost mournful cry, Stipe most effectively plays the dual role of rock god and wounded introvert on "The Ascent of Man."

With its seemingly random lines — "A motorscooter goat-legged pan / figure-eighting in quicksand" — the tune captures R.E.M.'s off-kilter side yet tinges it with Stipe's endearing vulnerability. "I am what I am" he sings — an everyday guy who happens to be one of alt-rock's finest music-makers, 20 years and counting.

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Kelley steps back with 'Boston'

By RICK PORTER
KRT CAMPUS

David E. Kelley insists he'll be scaling back his day-to-day workload on his new show, "Boston Legal." Eventually.

"I've been pretty involved in the first few, helping to launch the series, but as we go forward the responsibility for writing these characters will fall primarily with (executive producers) Jeff Rake and Scott Kaufer," he said.

"That's a good thing, because the last thing I wanted this series to be saddled with is an element of sameness, and when you have the same person writing it, there is that danger."

Kelley's prolific nature is the stuff of Hollywood lore — in the late 1990s he was writing or co-writing nearly every script of two shows, "Ally McBeal" and "The Practice" (from which "Boston Legal" was spun off). He believes, however, that "Boston Legal," which premiered Sunday night, has a better shot at success if it's allowed to develop a voice separate from his own.

So far, so good. Despite continuing the story of several characters who appeared at the tail end of "The Practice" last season, "Boston Legal" is about as different from its predecessor as two legal shows can be. Where "The Practice" featured dogged and righteous (sometimes self-righteous) defense attorneys fighting for justice, "Boston Legal" has anything-goes civil attorneys fighting for their clients — and a fat fee.

Leading the charge are James Spader as the oily Alan Shore and William Shatner as senior partner Denny Crane; both men are reprising roles that won them Emmys this year. The tone of the new show, Kelley says, will be much more upbeat as it celebrates its characters' eccentricities.

"This one, I think, will cater more toward escapism," he said. "The storylines will be more fun, there will probably be more soap opera as we go forward. ... When you have at the center of your hub a character like Alan Shore, that necessarily shifts it to a different

being." The challenge for "Boston Legal," Kelley thinks, will be keeping Shore's irreverence intact now that the people around him are just as amoral as he is. "The equation has changed a little bit (because) none of the surrounding characters take themselves quite so seriously" as did the lawyers on "The Practice," Kelley said. "We always want him to be the guy who disrupts and upsets apple carts, sometimes even his own."

"I think the key for all the writers as we go forward is to explore him in all his complexities and not be afraid of his darker side."

Kelley may occasionally be one of those writers, but he says he's taking part in a "12-step program" to let Rake, Kaufer and fellow executive producer Bill D'Elia — who previously worked with Kelley on "Ally McBeal" and "Chicago Hope" — take charge of the show. Kelley has collaborated on several of "Boston Legal's" first six scripts but is slowly trying to extract himself from the day-to-day running of

the show. "My difficulty is when I'm sort of one foot in and one foot out," he said. "If one foot is in, I tend to want to step over the line and be immersed up to my chest like I am with the shows I've historically run. When I'm out, when both feet are out, I've been able to do that successfully. ... I think we're shooting episode six (this week) and probably I've taken a half-step back with each episode."

Old, workaholic habits die hard, though.

"The reason I wanted to step back this year is because I really wanted more time to develop what the next best will be," he said of his plans to work on a new show. What that will be, he isn't saying yet — he knows only that he wants to challenge himself and that "I don't want it to be something I'm facile at."

"So that will be my challenge, and the other challenge, I guess, will be knowing when to parent and when not to on this series," he said. "But for the most part, I have a terrible time letting go."

'Huckabees' director shares inspirations

By MOIRA MACDONALD
KRT CAMPUS

It was midway through the interview when I realized that talking to writer/director David O. Russell is a bit like watching his new movie, "I (Heart) Huckabees." Both experiences are zany, talky rides, peppered with existential philosophy and snappy diversion, and both are ultimately optimistic and uplifting, if not always entirely comprehensible.

Russell, 46, an unpredictable charmer in a slightly crumpled navy suit and just-woke-up hair, came to town last week to promote "Huckabees," his fourth feature. And yes, he did talk about the movie, during an enjoyable 40 minutes in which he also discussed fashion (a publicist's snappy pink poncho), politics (a spot-on imitation of the previous night's presidential debate), technology (of a photographer's remote flash, he exclaimed, "It's like a little R2-D2!"), In Style magazine, Zen meditation, and the "big ball of wicker" given to him on his first visit to Seattle in 1994. And it all made perfect sense, if you let it.

Between all of these diversions, and a couple of dances, Russell traced the

history of "Huckabees," a comedy in which a young activist (Jason Schwartzman) attempts to sort out his life by hiring a pair of existential detectives (Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin). The film has been in the making since 1990, Russell said, but it really began with his first spiritual experience, as a child, while walking on a field behind his middle school. Later readings of J.D. Salinger helped shape his ideas about spirituality and the self, as did his later studies at Amherst College with Indo-Tibetan scholar Robert Thurman (yes, Uma's father).

"Dustin Hoffman's character is based on him — he always wore suits," remembered Russell. "So it was very important for me to have these suits in the movie, a certain formality."

Schwartzman, Tomlin and Mark Wahlberg (of "Three Kings") were all attracted to the project. But the script just wasn't working, so Russell put it away. "Two weeks later I had a dream. I always write my dreams in a notebook and don't read them for a couple weeks. This time, it says, 'I'm being followed by a woman detective not for criminal reasons, for existential reasons.' And I said, oh, there's the story, that's it. And I wrote this, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

David O. Russell talks about what shaped his film "I Heart Huckabees" in a recent interview in Seattle, Wash.

my assistant Jeff (Baena) became my co-writer, because I was tired of writing alone."

Thus began the "Huckabees" adventure, which included reading the script aloud to Hoffman in order to entice him ("He said, 'Arthur Miller did that, and I got all dumb'"), recruiting Jude Law,

Naomi Watts and French actress Isabelle Huppert, and conducting a free-spirited shoot of the film last year. Clearly saddened by a "hideous" recent New York Times article that described several on-set meltdowns, Russell spoke affectionately of working with his cast. "I would love to make another film with them."

ALIVE

Continued from page 6

Brown's performance of this soulful piece was intense and on-target. The group displayed its ensemble sound in "Alright, OK, You Win," an energetic piece in which the men and women answered back and forth, and the instrumentalists got a chance to shine as soloists.

Second-year music composition student and Carolina Alive member Nevitt sang the solo for her original composition "Your Music," a spellbinding piece featuring a rich choral texture, a sinuous melody and a haunting contrapuntal section. "Your Music" surpassed most of the other pieces on the program in complexity and originality, and was one of the highlights of an evening of outstanding music. Nevitt is a creative and gifted composer with a talent for vocal writing. Another of her compositions will be performed on Nov. 9 at the Composer's Concert.

The concert ended with the upbeat gospel piece "Operator." Kelly Mayo's no-holds-barred solo captivated the audience. Mayo, whose voice was also featured in "Too Young to Go Steady," is a performer with unsurpassed range, energy and power.

Carolina Alive's enthusiasm energized the audience into giving them a standing ovation. Their remarkably professional sound, fun and romantic repertoire, and winning presence made for an exhilarating evening.

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