

Versus

Entertainment & Culture at Vanderbilt

DECEMBER 3—DECEMBER 9, 2008 VOL. 46, N° 26

“Abstract Progressive” rapping duo **The Knux** are giving **Vincent Chase** his **soundtrack** and **garnering accolades** for their debut album **“Remind Me in Three Days.”** Check out our **exclusive interview** on **page 7.**

We saw a lot of movies over break. We weigh in on which to see and ... from which to flee.

“80s and Heartbreaks” is really good. Hey, Kanye, hey.

The KNUX

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Harley Allen Band — Station Inn

The go-to joint for bluegrass in the Music City features Harley Allen, a well-known song writer who's worked with Garth Brooks, Dierks Bentley and Gary Allan to name a few. Make sure to see this living legend in action. (\$10, 9 p.m.)

Roman Candle — The Mercy Lounge

Mercy Lounge is putting on an in-the-round featuring Roman Candle and the Deep Vibration, Keegan DeWitt and Mikky Ekko. Why would they do this? To celebrate the release of Roman Candle's EP, of course! (\$7, 8 p.m.)

Golden Animals and Nite Nite — Exit/In

Have you ever wanted to see a two-person rock band covered in gold sparkles? Look no further than Linda from Sweden and Tommy from Baltimore, aka Golden Animals and Nite Nite. (TBA, 8 p.m.)

Safetysuit with Radioactive Candy — 12th and Porter

Add one part neo-pop grooves, three parts “wall of sound” and two parts of the musical majesty and magic of bands like U2 and you'll have Safetysuit. That sounds delicious. (\$10, 8 p.m., 114 12th Ave. North)

In The Row — The Bluebird Cafe

Bluebird's weekly showcase of upcoming songwriting talent features Elizabeth Marlow, Sonia Leigh, Ladd Smith and Tom Bohn. Get a preview of the music you'll be listening in the next few years. (Free, 6 p.m., 4104 Hillsboro Road)

Carissa Lee Broadwater's Going Away Party — The Basement

That's right, Carissa is leaving us. But to say goodbye, she's having her friends FreshPack, Brian Ritchey, Jon Byrd, Christy Fields, Matt Haley, Justin Collins, Mando Saenz, Molly Thomas and others play at her party. That's a bunch of music for not too much money. Sweet deal. (\$7, 8 p.m.)

Beegie Adair — F. Scott's Restaurant and Jazz Bar

Jazz pianist Beegie Adair has been called “elegant” by the Los Angeles Times and “one of the finest piano players in the world” by Entertainment News. Need another reason to check out this performance? It's free! (Free, 7 p.m.)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

Parachute Musical and KinderCastle with Noises 10 — The Mercy Lounge and Cannery Ballroom

Part of the Mercy Lounge's Winter of Dreamz musical showcase, Friday's event showcases Parachute Musical and KinderCastle along with opener Noises 10. Head to the Mercy Lounge to enjoy some live local music and \$2.50 pints courtesy of Winter of Dreamz co-presenter Sweetwater 420. (\$7 advance/\$10 at door, 9 p.m.)

Guerrilla Radio and Behind The Sun — Exit/In

Rage Against the Machine tribute band Guerilla Radio joins Behind the Sun, a Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute band, for a night full of everyone's favorite '90s throwbacks. These two are the closest you can get without seeing the real thing! (\$10, 9 p.m.)

Bill Monroe Appreciation Night — Station Inn

Known as “the father of bluegrass music,” Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys pioneered the bluegrass genre. It went on to help found many other styles, including western swing, honky-tonk and even rock 'n' roll. The Station Inn is hosting a night of artists influenced by Monroe in honor of his being elected into the Country Music and Rock and Roll halls of fame. (\$12, 7 p.m.)

Swing Latino — Cafe Bella

A free salsa class will be hosted at Cafe Bella, followed by a performance by local Latin musicians Swing Latino. Salsa, merengue and cha-cha are just a few of the genres that Swing Latino will perform. Following Swing Latino, disc jockeys will spin Latin tracks for a late-night party. (\$10, 10 p.m., 606 Ninth Ave. South)

Alice Clark Art Showcase — Rocketown

For a night of great art accompanied by great music, head over to Rocketown. Works by local artist Alice Clark will be showcased, along with accompanying music from From The Pawn, Burn This City, Goodbye Apathy, Dissect the Coroner, Demeanor, Adelaide, None Shall Pass, Colby & TomTom, So To Speak, The Castle Is a Tomb, Eve Of Shadows and Acrasia. (\$6, 7 p.m., 401 Sixth Ave. South)

Forget Cassettes with The Sincerity Guild and Nite Nite — The End

Core Cassettes Beth Cameron and Doni Schroader are back and leading their band with a revamped sound. The group has just finished putting together a new album, and they're ready to jam to their mellow rock at The End. (\$7, 9 p.m., 2219 Elliston Place)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Carols & Cocoa — Barnes and Noble, Cool Springs

Need to get into the Christmas spirit? The Battle Ground Academy Middle School Chorus will lead you in some of your favorite seasonal carols as you enjoy delicious hot chocolate. (Free, 11 a.m., 1701 Mallory Lane, Brentwood)

Winter of Dreamz featuring Space Capone and Kyle Andrews with Elle Macho — The Mercy Lounge and Cannery Ballroom

Some of Nashville's most interesting new bands will share the stage tonight at the Mercy Lounge's special event, during which attendees can enjoy \$2.50 pints of Sweetwater 420. Space Capone will bring a new take on classic funk, while Kyle Andrews' alternative funk will provide a welcomed break from the ordinary. (\$7 advance/\$10 at the door, 9 p.m.)

John Karl — Wildhorse Saloon

House musician and self-declared Yankee redneck John Karl has been touring nonstop for the past three years all across the country, but calls the Wildhorse his home. (TBA, 7 p.m.)

Christina Watson — F. Scott's Restaurant and Jazz Bar

Vocalist Christina Watson's soaring voice has been likened to that of Carmen McRae, Bessie Smith and Diana Krall, and she transitions between jazz and funk and soul seamlessly. (Free, 7:30 p.m.)

American Bang with Modoc and The Tits — The Basement

This Nashville-based rock band describes itself to be “Southern-fried garage rock.” Check out the band's MySpace for a preview of the energetic, rock-infused show that American Bang is sure to bring to The Basement. (\$10, 9 p.m.)

Karyn Rochelle and Friends — The Listening Room Cafe

Nashville native and country singer-songwriter Karyn Rochelle has penned numerous hits for fellow country crooners Kellie Pickler and Trisha Yearwood, including Yearwood's “Georgia Rain,” which earned Rochelle a BMI award for being one of the most performed country songs of 2005. (TBA, 9 p.m., 209 10th Ave. South, Suite 200)

Copland for Organ — Nashville Symphony

Looking for something unexpected? SunTrust Classical Series presents this special program, featuring the Nashville Symphony. Eighty musicians and 3,568 organ pipes combine for a huge, audience-encompassing sound. (Tickets TBD, 8 p.m.)

The Regulars

THE RUTLEDGE
410 Fourth Ave. S. 37201
782-6858

MERCY LOUNGE/CANNERY BALLROOM
1 Cannery Row 37203
251-3020

BLUEBIRD CAFE
4104 Hillsboro Road 37215
383-1461

EXIT/IN
2208 Elliston Place 37203
321-3340

STATION INN
402 12th Ave. S. 37203
255-3307

THE BASEMENT
1604 Eighth Ave. S. 37203
254-1604

F. SCOTT'S RESTAURANT AND JAZZ BAR
2210 Crestmoor Road 37215
269-5861

SCHERMERHORN SYMPHONY CENTER
1 Symphony Place 37201
687-6500

3RD AND LINDSLEY
818 Third Ave. S. 37210
259-9891

CAFE COCO
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Versus

DECEMBER 3—DECEMBER 3, 2008 VOL. 46, Nº. 26

Versus Magazine

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FROM THE EDITOR



As we tend to do, Versus is making history this week. We are ahead of the curve. We are breaking news. How, you ask? You see those goofball brothers The Knux on the cover of the issue? Well, I am here to tell you that they just happen to be The Next Big Thing. And because we are ahead of the curve, ergo, you are ahead of the curve. You music hipster, you.

New Orleans-hailing brothers Kintrell, 26, and Alvin, 24, Lindsey (or if you are more comfortable with their stage names, "Krisby Kream" and "Rah Almillio," respectively) are making waves in the hip-hop community and earning themselves some well-deserved buzz. The duo has been playing music together for over a decade, as they were both in the marching band and jazz lessons as kids. However, with influences like the Wu-Tang Clan and the Gravediggaz, it didn't take long for the brothers' sound to evolve past the trumpet. With the upcoming release of their debut album "Remind Me in Three Days..." looming, they call themselves "abstract-progressive." I call them cool.

The brothers' sound is definitely rap, but the duo's rhymes are backed by layers of twangy, rock 'n' roll-influenced instrumentals, and the result is b-a-d-a-s-s. Need proof? HBO's "Entourage" used The Knux's song "Cappuccino" in a recent episode. Hey if Vincent Chase jams to it, I am definitely down.

Where else have we been? The movie theaters across America, apparently. Subsequently, we are devoting an entire page to the weekend's big releases, from "Twilight" to "The Boy in Striped Pajamas" to "Milk" just in time to distract you from studying for that looming nutrition final. Ugh. Remind me in three days.

Darcy Newell

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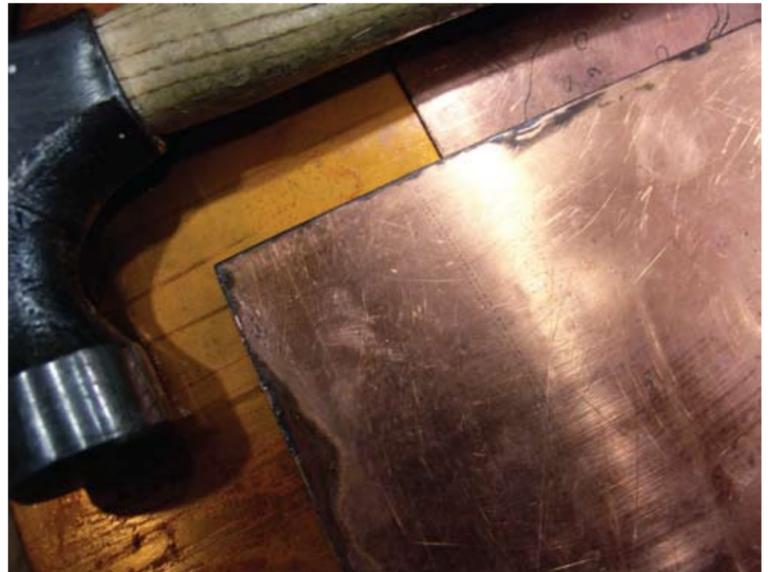


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PIC OF THE WEEK



AMELIA SPINNEY/VERSUS MAGAZINE

FICTION

CHILDREN AREN'T COLORING BOOKS. YOU DON'T GET TO FILL THEM WITH YOUR FAVORITE COLORS."

— **KHALED HOSSEINI**

Songs of Entitlement

The Knux

One of the great things about the arts is when you can find a way to synergistically combine different avenues of expression. Here at Versus, we're trying something new: Every week, we take the name of a song by a featured artist and have one of our writers turn it into a short story. This week we're giving you twice the bang for your buck with two songs from feature interview band The Knux.

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

"Playboys" were strewn about as I cautiously stepped into the room. The ash smell of cigars filled the room and overwhelmed my nostrils as my eyes tried to make some sense of the scene in front of me. The very best of Hugh Hefner wasn't even the weirdest thing on the burgundy shag carpet. A busted lava lamp was oozing in the corner, a full set of monopoly was set up (seemingly in mid-game) in the middle of the nudie magazines, an open pack of diapers with a cabbage patch kid spread eagle next to it, a still-burning cigarette in an ash tray in the shape of a dragon on the side table apparently from the '60s, various stuffed animals torn to bits with their stuffing all over the room. These were only a few of the things that lay about the scene. "Mark? Are you here?" I ventured.

I heard a sputter in the bathroom, kind of a relieved sigh muffled by the surrounding sea-foam green tile. As I jumped from island to island in the carpet, I wondered what the hell had happened here. Was he robbed? Was this the product of a 72-hour bender of Nyquil, Speed and Dr. Pepper? Or was Mark just the victim of a tragically misbalanced mix of Cheeseballs and Pixy Stix? Honestly, that crossed my mind.

I made it to the bathroom and slid onto the tile. The tub was overflowing with cloudy water and Mark lay face down in the toilet bowl in only a cheetah print cowboy hat and his Hello Kitty boxers. "What the hell happened to you?"

He slowly lifted his bruised head, "Oh man, where to begin? Remember that broad from the bar last night? Turns out she's a working lady, if ya know what I mean..."

HAIKUS

Words to live by in seventeen syllables

"I hate apple pie"
Is the worst possible phrase
I have ever heard.

Should we be thankful
That we've only three weeks left
Or sad they'll be gone?

KRIS STENSLAND
Fiction Editor

"Life In A Cage" really isn't as bad as you'd think. I have a meal plan of my own, you know. And without those pesky taste buds like you all have, I don't have to worry about variety, so a few of those nice brownish pebbles every day keeps me pretty solid.

I've really got everything you could ever want, and oftentimes I'm even better off than you are. My sweet wheel is way better than a treadmill, and they definitely don't make plastic balls big enough for you to fit in. Besides, my water bottle with the little ball bearing is way more fun than any satiating device you could ever come up with for yourself.

Further, there's no such thing as an emo hamster. There's no such thing as hamster loneliness. I have no girl-hamster problems because I don't have any feelings. Besides, you know, terrible fear. But generally it's just feeling like eating or running or making hamster babies (when the situation presents itself). So none of us have to worry about being remorseful, or being depressed or any of that. Which is great. Any time I start to feel down, I just bury myself in wood chips and all is right in the world.

Some would say that the Vanderbubble is like a big hamster cage. They're wrong.

Interested in writing a Song of Entitlement?
Interested in writing anything at all?

E-mail the Versus editors at versusvu@gmail.com!

ENTERTAINMENT

VERSUS MOVIE MADNESS

“FOUR CHRISTMASSES”

“SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE”

“BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS”

“TWILIGHT”

“MILK”

‘Four Christmases’ not four stars

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

It's that time of year again — Christmas time. It's the time for caroling, overeating and the odd Christmas movie. Past years have seen some classics including “Elf” and “Love Actually,” but 2008 is still searching for its Christmas glory. In search of such a prize, Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon have united this holiday season for “Four Christmases.”

The film follows the odd romance of Vaughn and Witherspoon as it is put to the greatest test of all: their families. Both sets of parents have divorced and are holding separate Christmas celebrations in different parts of town. Ergo, they must visit four Christmases. Clever, no?

Let's make something very clear — there is absolutely no on-screen chemistry between Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn. None. Zip. Zilch. Witherspoon's sophisticated,

somewhat prissy approach (as she has done in most of her latest roles) does not mesh with Vaughn's motor-mouthed, somewhat crazy portrayal of Brad. Think “Wedding Crashers” without Owen Wilson, and you'll have an idea of the kind of banter Vaughn rattles off (it is absolutely glorious). With that said, “Four Christmases” is a gem of a holiday movie. It does not try to be anything other than a fluffy, entertaining Christmas story. Its love story is believable, but “Casablanca” it is not. The laughs are easy and ever present (thanks mostly to the antics of Vaughn), and you'll find yourself leaving the theater with a smile.

It's not going to win any Oscars, but that is not what “Four Christmases” is trying to accomplish. It only wants your eight bucks and to entertain you for a little while. Definitely worth the money. ☞

‘Milk’ is good for you

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

There are countless unsung heroes in American history. You may never have heard of Harvey Milk in textbooks, history class or even on PBS specials, but this is a name you should know. It is a name that should jump to mind when one mentions the fight for universal human rights. Harvey Milk is a legitimate American hero, and this film proves it with gusto, class and inspiration.

Sean Penn tackles the role of Milk in Gus Van Sant's new biopic “Milk.” Milk was ashamed of his homosexuality when he lived in New York. When he turned 40, he decided to make a change. He moved to San Francisco and soon became a leader in the fight for homosexual rights, not just in San Francisco but also across the world. Harvey Milk was the first openly homosexual man to hold a major public office. However, his life was ended in a tragic and degrading fashion

by a bullet fired by a man named Dan White (Josh Brolin).

Van Sant has always been known as an auteur of film, and his newest film further testifies to his incredible gift with film. Penn will most likely win an Oscar for his portrayal of Milk, and the supporting cast is absolutely perfect. Few films have taken on such a hot-button issue at a time of political polarization (gay marriage was rated as the No. 1 issue determining voting patterns in the 2004 presidential election). The film's timing is no mistake, and it brings to light one of the foremost heroes in the fight for homosexual rights. This movie portrays a champion of one of the chief political movements of our generation. See this movie as soon as you can. You'll find a new hero in Harvey Milk. ☞

‘Twilight’ is amazing ... if you're a ‘Twilight’ fan

COURTNEY ROGERS
Culture Editor

I feel the need to preface this review with my complicated relationship with “Twilight.”

There's one part of me that loves the books. I read them all over the summer and finished “New Moon” in a single night only to wake up for work at 7 a.m. wondering what I was thinking. But in spite of how easily the “Twilight” series lures me in, I often find myself very frustrated by the entire plot. Yes, I love that Bella and Edward are so in love with one another, but sometimes it gets so over the top that I just want to yell at Bella and tell her to get a life beyond her hunky vampire. So it was with these conflicting emotions that I headed to the Green Hills movie theatre for the 12:01 a.m. screening of “Twilight.”

To say that the scene I beheld at midnight was overwhelming is a huge understatement. There were teenage girls everywhere. Some were in slippers and pajamas. Some were wearing hand-decorated T-shirts displaying messages along the lines of “Mrs. Edward Cullen” or “Team Jacob.” Seeing these eager fans made me more than a little embarrassed by my enthusiasm to see this movie the minute it opened, and as I waited in line for overpriced popcorn I hoped that I would not be put in the same fanatical category as them. But as my friends and I found our seats in the crowded theater, I dropped the too cool for “Twilight” act and allowed myself to get excited.

For those of you who don't know, “Twilight” is the story of a girl named Bella (Kristen Stewart) who falls in love with

a mysterious boy at her new high school, a vampire named Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson). Their dangerous romance leads them into an epic battle while also including copious amounts of smoldering looks and teenage angst along the way.

I'll start off with the good, which mostly involves Pattinson. You may remember him as Cedric Diggory from “Harry Potter,” and let me tell you, he makes an even more attractive vampire than he did a quidditch martyr. From his first appearance on screen with his gravity-defying hair style and



brooding expressions, I knew I would enjoy the movie at least from a purely superficial standpoint. The film also tries very hard to stay true to the book, and by and large it succeeds. Of course, if you're a fan of the books you're going to point out every scene that they cut, but that is the case with any book adaptation on the silver screen.

My first criticism of the movie has got to be the special effects. I understand that “Twilight” had a much smaller budget than most movies, but seriously those effects took away from the entire film. At one point, Edward explains why he can't go out in the sun by showing Bella what happens to his skin in the light and he is supposed to be so bright and radiant that it would be impossible for him to go out in public without being noticed. However, in the film his skin just gets kind of multicolored and the only way to understand that its supposed to be sparkly is by the little windchime sounds that play. It just looked lame, and it made Pattinson look like a slightly sweaty prism. The same goes for the scenes of Edward running — it just looked unrealistic and contrived. I questioned some of the characterization as well, especially when Edward shows up wearing Ray Bans at school and is all happy and smiley. He's a brooding Victorian vampire, not Mr. High School. It was over the top and too different from the rest of his character.

Overall, I'm still conflicted over my “Twilight” feelings, but despite all of my criticisms of its shortcomings I really did enjoy it. It's definitely a movie that I would see again in theaters, and I'll most likely buy the DVD if only for Pattinson. ☞

‘Striped Pajamas’ is tired

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

Studying the Holocaust is one of the most important lessons in modern history. George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Indeed, one of the greatest crimes against humanity in world history deserves as much attention as possible. However, “The Boy In The Striped Pajamas” tackles the subject in a somewhat trite or cliché manner — presenting an important topic in a tired way.

The movie focuses on the story of a young boy whose father is a German SS officer in charge of a concentration camp. However, our protagonist (played by the charming Asa Butterfield) does not understand the underlying “principles” of Germany's persecution of Jews. In his travels, he befriends a young boy sitting by the fence of his father's camp. He grows closer to the boy and begins to question the wisdom of his father's persecution of Jews.

Do not get me wrong, the Holocaust is one of the most heartbreaking tragedies in world history. However, this film is not one of the best portrayals of this dreadful time in human history. It's quite predictable and feels a little tired, however there are a few interesting

elements. The film portrays the dissent among Germans against the persecution of Jews and the mission of Hitler, a refreshing reminder that not all of Germany was evil from 1938 to 1945. Indeed, “Striped Pajamas” even touches on the duties and fears of being a soldier in the Third Reich.

“The Boy In The Striped Pajamas” was not a bad film, but it was also not a great one. If you want a moving depiction of the Holocaust, rent “Schindler's List” or “Life is Beautiful.” Both movies won numerous Oscars (and for good reasons) and portray the Holocaust in a much more original and accurate way. In comparison, “Striped Pajamas” just isn't nearly as good. ☞



Who wants to be a ‘Slumdog Millionaire’?

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

Few movies can claim to effectively tackle the topic of destiny. Most feel clunky or just plain silly (a notable exception being “The Matrix”), but Danny Boyle's (director of the legendary “Tranpotting”) latest release handles destiny with class and panache, and it may even make your skin tingle before the credits roll.

“Slumdog Millionaire” opens with Jamal Malik (Dev Patel) in the hot seat of the Indian version of “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?” He is just one question away from winning the ultimate prize of 20 million rupees, and no one can quite understand how this kid from the slums of Mumbai, India, could have gotten so far on the quiz show. Heck, lawyers and doctors don't get past 60 thousand rupees. However, we soon find out that Jamal's tragic story informs every single one of his answers on the show and guides him to fame and fortune. Indeed, one could even say that it is his destiny.

I know what you're thinking, “This

sounds super cheesy. Some rags to riches kid winning millions of dollars on a game show. Right.” Most of the time, I would agree with you. However, this film presents itself in a fresh way and really crafts a fine story. It feels extremely real and believable, and the actual story of Jamal is very well written and interesting. Boyle's direction is also a welcome change from what could have been a boring exercise in cinematography. Even the music is fantastic and rife with Indian artists and songs inspired by Indian music (expect a lot of M.I.A.). Plus, this film has some excellent footage of Mumbai, the latest victim of terrorist violence. Due to this, you may be seeing the city in the news with increasing regularity and this is an excellent introduction to the city and Indian culture at large.

“Slumdog Millionaire” is never boring, and its enthralling story is sure to keep you interested. It may just revive your faith in destiny. ☞

MUSIC



"I've had the honor of working with some of the greatest artists in black music, and I can't help but be a better artist as a result of it."
—John Legend

SETLIST

TODAY

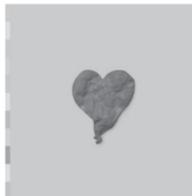
Jim Heath, a.k.a. **The Reverend Horton Heat**, brings his band and their brand of gritty, down-and-dirty punkabilly to Cannery Ballroom. The Texas three-piece group mixes country, punk, rockabilly and other musical genres to create a unique sound that has generated a cult following as well as mainstream success. Tickets are \$20, and opener **Nashville Pussy** kick the show off at 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 4

The four members of alternative rock band **Safetysuit** have been friends since before the band's founding, and their camaraderie shows through in their energetic live show. Catch the group's grandiose rock performance at 8 p.m. at 12th and Porter. Tickets range from \$10 to \$12.

FRIDAY, DEC. 5

Nashville's historic Grand Ole Opry features country artists of all ages, styles and sounds. Head to the Ryman Auditorium this Friday to see performances by **Emmylou Harris**, **Marty Stuart**, **Del McCoury Band** and more in an evening reminiscent of old-school countrified Nashville. Tickets start at \$26, and the show kicks off at 8 p.m.



"808s and Heartbreak"

Kanye and Coldplay battle for most anticipated album



"Prospekt's March"

'808s and Heartbreak': Get Your Fix

CHARLES KESSERLING
Staff Writer

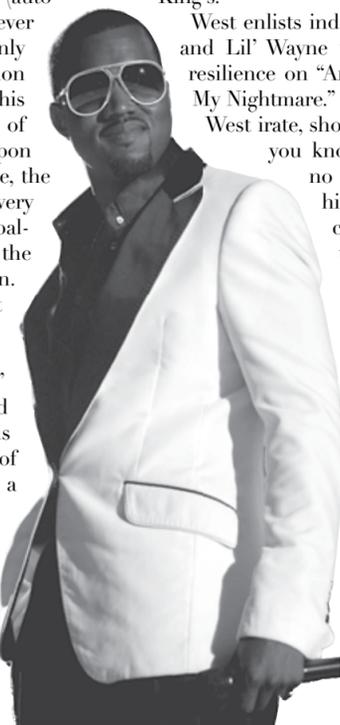
Kanye West isn't happy. Fortunately for us, though, his displeasure with life inspired "808s and Heartbreak," an emotional success.

The album, 52 minutes of aural sentiment ranging from subdued bitterness to tumultuous rage, radically redefines West as an artist. Only recently achieving his potential as a rapper, West chooses to express his anger and anguish, spurred on by the death of his mother and separation from his fiancée, exclusively with his singing voice.

Aided entirely by the trendy production effect Auto-Tune, he belts out (auto-croons?) his problems for whoever will listen. While West is certainly no T-Pain, the genuine emotion in his voice and creativity of his words make up for any lack of vocal talent. Also, West relies upon the Roland 808 drum machine, the album's partial namesake, for every track, using rudimentary, tribal-esque beats to help convey the disc's deep, ever-present passion.

Heartfelt at times, hateful at others, the album navigates the many manifestations of heartbreak. "Heartless," "Coldest Winter" and "Bad News" represent West at his lowest, a mournful victim of tragedy. In "Coldest Winter," a heavy tribute to his deceased mentor, manager and mother, Donda West, the artist questions "Will I ever love again?" utterly unsure of the answer.

The record's hidden track, a six-minute freestyle recorded live in Singapore,



mtvpress.com

and "Welcome to Heartbreak" resound with the same sense of despondence. Both detail West's wish to "be a real boy," free from the pressure, exposure and pain of celebrity. In his freestyle, the artist explains he "sacrificed a real life for all the fame and flashing lights," a sharp shift in perspective since cheerfully flaunting his "Good Life" last year.

"808s and Heartbreak" peaks in quality when West becomes spiteful, reacting to his failed relationship with lyrical resentment and retribution. In "RoboCop," among the few upbeat cuts on the album, West slights his ex (assumedly) repeatedly, calling her "a drama queen that would turn his life into Steven King's."

West enlists industry friends Young Jeezy and Lil' Wayne to help him express his resilience on "Amazing" and "See You In My Nightmare." In fact, "Nightmare" finds West irate, shouting "tell everybody that you know, that I don't love you no mo'!" while Weezy makes his cohort's feelings just as clear: "We were once a fairy tale, but this is farewell."

"Say You Will," "Love Lockdown," and "Paranoid" all flawlessly explore what could have been, at three different tempos.

Certainly the result of emotional necessity, "808s and Heartbreak" exists because Kanye West needed musical therapy, not more fans. However, even if your life hasn't been ruined lately, snag a copy and vibe — if for no other reason than to hear West sing falsetto. ☘

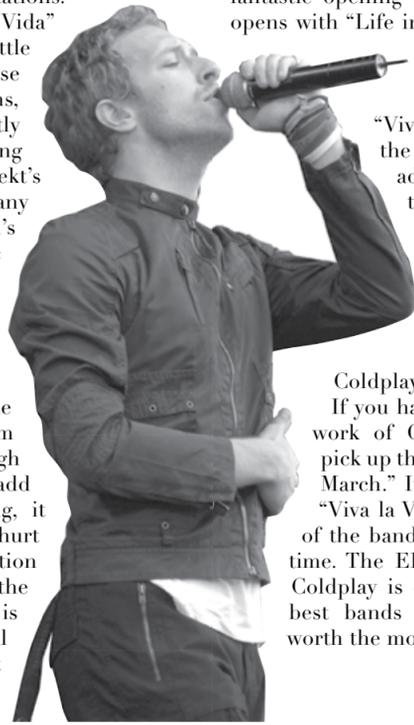
It's a 'March' of good 'Prospekts'

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

Coldplay sure does talk a big game. Chris Martin, the frontman and singer of Coldplay, claimed earlier this year that their latest album, "Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends," would be the best album ever made. To be honest, Chris, it was good, but it was not THAT good. In fact, it wasn't even the best of Coldplay. None of the songs recaptured the magic of "Clocks," "Yellow" or even "In My Place," and, frankly, it was a little disappointing. This is not to say that the album was bad, but it certainly did not meet or exceed expectations.

Indeed, "Viva la Vida" always felt a little incomplete. In response to such allegations, Coldplay has recently released an eight-song EP titled "Prospekt's March" that quells any doubts about the band's prowess or virtuosic ability.

The EP has some notable additions, including a remix of "Lost!" entitled "Lost+" with some fresh rhymes from Jay-Z himself. Although it doesn't really add anything to the song, it certainly does not hurt it. Indeed, the addition of rap on top of the music of Coldplay is an interesting musical experiment, and it may even find an audience somewhere.



live8live.com

Other notables include the tracks "Glass of Water" and "Rainy Day," which are both reminiscent of the glory days of Coldplay (think of the lyrics of "Parachutes" mixed with the musicality of "A Rush Of Blood To The Head"). Other tracks include a remix of "Lovers in Japan" that virtually sounds the same as the original besides a few background vocals and couple tweaks. The title track "Prospekt's March" is a slow melodic exploration of symbolism and imagery, but the haunting melodies and vague lyrics never really go anywhere. The less-than-a-minute track "Postcards From Far Away" is a nice piano break after the fantastic opening track. However, the EP opens with "Life in Technicolor II," which

you could think is just an expanded version of the opening track of "Viva la Vida." Fortunately, the band also decided to add some lyrics to the track that really make it shine. It's exactly the kind of thing that "Viva la Vida" was missing. If you buy this EP for no other reason, get it for this track. It's one of Coldplay's finest.

If you have any affection for the work of Coldplay, make sure to pick up their latest EP, "Prospekt's March." It's the missing piece to "Viva la Vida" and contains some of the band's finest work in a long time. The EP will remind you why Coldplay is often called one of the best bands around. Trust me, it's worth the money. ☘

Nashville royals, Kings of Leon, rock its hometown

NATALIE FRITZ
Staff Writer

Equipped with gorgeous Gibson guitars and clad in skinny black pants, cowboy boot loafers, flannel shirts and leather jackets, the boys of Kings of Leon certainly knew how to play the part of southern rockers. Their distinctive style has been compared to a Strokes and Lynyrd Skynyrd love child. They came back to their hometown for their final stop on this leg of their American tour, after which they will head over the pond to England, where they have sold 10 times as many albums.

The venue, Nashville Municipal Auditorium, was very open, essentially a large general admission pit with stadium seating on the side, much like Memorial Gym's set up for



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Quake. The tour is in promotion of their freshly dropped fourth record, "Only By The Night." Kings Of Leon's new single, "Sex on Fire," is climbing the billboard charts after it was featured on the popular TV show "Gossip Girl," and the Kings just booked their largest

show ever — at the famed Madison Square Garden in January.

Opening indie rock bands The Whigs and We Are Scientists set the stage for the Kings, after which the headliners kicked off their set with a rousing track called "Crawl" from the new album. Now with a dimensional repertoire, the band made use of a variety of their material. The set was incredible, showcasing 24 songs. Old favorites like "Taper Jean Girl," "California Waiting," "The Bucket," and "Slow Night So Long" were full of bravado and their familiar youthful energy. Lead Singer Caleb Followill, who spoke minimally, modestly explained, "We just want y'all to know, me and my brother, we started writing songs in this town a long time ago. And we weren't very good at it either and everyone in town

told us that too. But I think we got better at it, so ... I'd like to thank y'all." The sophistication of new tracks such as "Cold Desert" and "Use Somebody" created an intriguing contrast to the simplicity of their earlier work. The enthusiastic hipster audience couldn't get enough, and everywhere one turned fans were belting out the words and scating bass lines, even to songs from the new album.

After the initial set and a brief break, the band remerged for the encore, which began with a shout out to the audience and the band's momma, followed by the defiant and soulful ballad "Knocked Up." The finale "Black Thumbnail" was an appropriate farewell: "From runways to the road I ramble along." Let's hope the Kings ramble by again soon. ☘

Broken Social Scene steals the show — by performing

AVERY SPOFFORD
Music Editor

Some bands seem to treat their live shows like a tedious desk job — get the day's work done, and do it in time get the heck out before rush hour. With late arrivals, shortened sets and a lack of interaction with the audience, even (and perhaps especially) some of today's most popular groups seem to drag their heels when it comes to bringing their music to audiences in a live setting. Rarely does a band give an audience what it expects and deserves in a live performance.

However, whenever I start to grumble about this deplorable state, to mope about "what the industry has come to," a band steps in to restore my faith in the popular live music experience. Broken Social Scene, Canada's premier indie rock band, slapped me in the face last week with their outstanding live performance at the Cannery Ballroom and reminded me that, even in an era where Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers rule the

charts, real music and live performances still exist for real music fans.

Opener Land of Talk set the tone for the evening with their listenable but complex songs, quickly impressing the audience and holding its attention throughout their set. As my friends and I started to listen, what began as an aimless stroll around the half-empty Cannery Ballroom turned into a frantic scramble to find out the group's name and more about it. I was equally, if not more, impressed by Land of Talk as I was by Broken Social Scene, and fully expect them to follow in Broken Social Scene's footsteps to become another of Canada's great indie rock groups.

Having missed the first half of Land of Talk's set, we didn't have to wait long before Broken Social Scene took the stage. With a large variety and number of instruments and band members (at least six playing on stage at all times), Broken Social Scene's stage setup resembled that of an orchestra more than that of a rock band. The expansive lineup paid off, however, allowing the group to deliver a rich and textured sound that

brought out the intricacies of each song. The acoustics and sound quality of the Cannery Ballroom were fantastic, as well, contributing further to Broken Social Scene's professional, flawless sound.

Broken Social Scene must have known they sounded good, too, because they just didn't want to get off the stage. The group switched instruments, faked the crowd out with crescendo after crescendo, and played for a full 40 minutes longer than their slated set time. The band members were obviously having fun and enjoying themselves, and the audience enjoyed the performance in turn. Although a few stragglers from the audience wandered off as the group continued to rock into the wee hours of the morning, most of the crowd remained, no one really minding that the band seemed like they would never stop playing. Even the staff of the Cannery was confused — "I don't know what's going on, they were supposed to go off like 40 minutes ago," said the manager of the venue, Andrew Mischke.



jamoo.com

I'll admit it — before their show in Nashville, I didn't even listen to Broken Social Scene. After Tuesday, however, that's changed. Even for someone who isn't a Broken Social Scene devotee, the show was a fantastic display of musicianship and true love of performance. The show instills hope that there are still bands out there that strive to put on a great show and connect with their audiences, and musicians who enjoy the experience of performing rather than waiting for the end of a set time limit. ☘

SATURDAY, DEC. 6

Head to the nearby Exit/In on Saturday evening to catch four bands for the price of one! **The Royce, Lovers and Liars, Beautifully Crude** and **Hollowday** all show off their unique styles this weekend at the local venue. Ticket prices are TBA, and the doors open at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, DEC. 7

Every true country fan in Nashville should be at the Sommet Center this Sunday to catch performances by Grammy Award winner and multi-platinum artist **Carrie Underwood** and opener **Little Big Town**. Ticket costs range from \$32.50 to \$52.50, and Little Big Town sets things off right at 7:30.

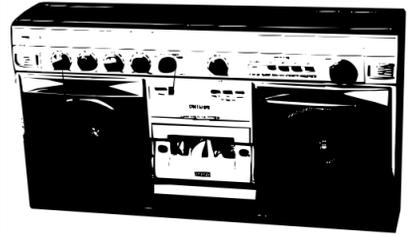
MONDAY, DEC. 8

Western swing band **The Time Jumpers** are heading to the Station Inn to show Nashville a good time. Comprised of Nashville's best studio musicians, The Time Jumpers combine classic influences as well as new material to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Tickets are \$10, and The Time Jumpers start swingin' at 9 p.m.

TUESDAY, DEC. 9

Up-and-comers **Thriving Ivory** bring their alternative rock sound to local venue Rockettown. Hailed by VH1 as one of the year's hottest artists "you oughta know," Thriving Ivory cite diverse influences throughout the rock genre and are an act to catch before they blow up. Tickets are \$12, and doors open at 6:30 p.m.

SOUNDTRACK TO THE ISSUE



We at Versus have excellent taste in music. Below, the editors share what tracks we've been spinning as we create the glory you're holding in your hands.

1. "SEX ON FIRE" *Kings of Leon*
2. "STREETLIGHTS" *Kanye West*
3. "PELICAN BAY" *Jenny Lewis*
4. "WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG" *The Killers*
5. "MOTHER CRIES WOLF" *Amie Miriello*
6. "JOHNNY AND JUNE" *Heidi Newfield*
7. "MANNEQUIN" *Britney Spears*
8. "I'M GOOD, I'M GONE (Metronomy Remix)" *Lykke Li*
9. "GHOSTWRITER (Remix)" *RJD2*
10. "LIGHTS AND MUSIC" *Cut Copy*

UnLabel helps bands who are unable

EILEEN BEGLEY
Staff Reporter

Sleeping Naked was a problem for bandmates Craig Tallent and Holden Seguso. After forming their band, Sleeping Naked, the two members left their Florida high school and headed in two different directions, but Sleeping Naked left them with a strong desire to share their pop-funk sound with the world.

Tallent, now a junior, headed to Nashville to play golf at Vanderbilt University, and Seguso left to play tennis at the University of California at Los Angeles. Even though Tallent and Seguso coincidentally live in two heavily music-influenced cities, Sleeping Naked still had a problem.

"He's in the West and I'm in the East, so we can't play live shows and can't have that exposure together," explains Tallent. Then Sleeping Naked learned about Pennsylvania-based MilkBoy Recording and their new

record label, the UnLabel.

MilkBoy Recording co-owners Tommy Joyner and Jamie Lokoff noticed artists recording their songs but leaving their studio without a way to publicize their musical accomplishment. And with many artists going independent and not signing to major record labels, they recognized a future business: a record label that does not sign artists but still produces and promotes singers and bands. The recent creation of the UnLabel allows recording artists to manage their own careers, artistically and financially. And, in the case of Sleeping Naked, also explore other opportunities simultaneously.

The UnLabel easily allows bands from all over the country to access their a la carte services. They offer three different categories of services: creative, marketing and business. If a band decides to purchase business cards and flyers, their graphic design artist will design the band's logo. If Web design and Facebook is not a singer's forte, the UnLabel

will create and design their Web page. If a songwriter would like to copyright a song, the UnLabel helps guide the songwriter through the copyrighting process. Basically, for a fee the UnLabel staff will produce, promote and publicize your band.

For Sleeping Naked, finding the UnLabel was the solution to their bi-coastal problem. The UnLabel allows Tallent and Seguso to continue their collegiate athletic careers by helping create the Sleeping Naked penguin logo and marketing their music on the Internet and iTunes. "MilkBoy is doing things we can't do now," says Tallent. The UnLabel is even trying to set up a small summer tour that help will accommodate the band and their need to practice at driving ranges and tennis courts.

For a price, Sleeping Naked can now fall asleep in California and Tennessee knowing that their songs will become known to the world, thanks to MilkBoy and the UnLabel. ☼

Trombone Shorty stars with his sound

ZAC HUNTER
Staff Writer

For those looking to add something different to their iTunes library, check out Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews. Trombone Shorty is a jazz virtuoso on both the trombone and the trumpet. His sound is unique and comes from his background as a native of one of the most musical neighborhoods in New Orleans and a graduate of the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, which boasts one of the best high school music programs in the country. Andrews has been leading Mardi Gras marching bands since he could walk, is coming off a fairly recent world tour

with Lenny Kravitz, and is developing into one of the finest wind instrumentalists in the music world today.

He is one of those guys who can do anything on the horn. Whether he is playing in the Troy Andrews Quintet, a group with a classic (albiet sometimes boring) "New Orleans Jazz" sound, or if he is blasting his trombone on stage with his band "Trombone Shorty and Orleans Ave," this young superstar will blow you away. Shorty rocks anything from his original funk/rock/hip-hop songs like "Frontin'" to covers like AC/DC's "Back in Black." He also plays Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get it On" on the trumpet as one of the most impressive displays of musicianship I've

ever seen. Everything he does is with careful musical consideration and taste, but never sounds overly polished or produced.

While his recordings ("Orleans and Claiborne," "The End of the Beginning") give a good general look at his work, the best part of Trombone Shorty's music is the live performance, which often features him holding a couple of notes continuously for at least two or three minutes with only one breath. Unfortunately most of us probably missed his show at the Exit/In over Thanksgiving break. So, for a new artist to look for in the concert listings and some new albums to add to your mundane library, look up Troy, and you won't be disappointed. ☼

Refreshing lyrics lead to unexpected fame for Noah and the Whale

ANA ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

British band Noah and the Whale has previously claimed to have no real ambition in the music world. Besides continual performances at local venues, they saw no real future until the release of their 2008 debut album, "Peaceful, The World Lays Me Down." Singles such as "Shape of My Heart" and "5 Years Time" have inadvertently caught the attention of many listeners. Their schedule of gigs and interviews has grown nonstop alongside their fame.

The band formed in 2006 in London, England, and members include Charlie Fink (vocals, guitar), Doug Fink (drums), Tom Hobden (fiddle) and Matt "Urby Whale" Owens (bass). Writer and musician Charlie Fink comes up with most of the lyrics to their music, which is described both as folk and punk rock. Often, he gets inspiration from his own past experiences and philosophies on life, as well as his ex-girlfriend and former band member, Laura Marling. Colorful clothing may constitute half of their signature style, but the other half lies in the simplicity and sincerity of Noah and the Whale's lyrics.

"Shape of My Heart" discusses the advantage of having a calloused and bent heart. The positive angle is that a person loses the ability to be affected by adverse situations or daily struggles. By avoiding any sort of

growth or show of emotion, the speaker leads a passable sort of life. The problem is that in order to change and live, a person has to feel what it is to suffer and die. An undercurrent of sadness pervades the song, but Fink leaves a positive message for his listeners. A person must accept hardships in order to improve his character.

"5 Years Time" is about a fictitious yet universal relationship between two people. Fink avoids the generic love song by adding small details such as going to the zoo, making jokes and smoking. Because of these personal touches, the song becomes both original and relatable to all sorts of audiences. The most memorable phrase is when Fink says he no longer feels like he has to be James Dean in order to catch her attention. He lists the worst that could happen to the relationship toward the end of the song:

They may no longer be on speaking terms, they might not know each other or get along, yet he believes that "in five years time, you just might prove me wrong." There is a chance it might

all turn out OK. This spark of hope adds a special flavor to the song. Despite its sad undertones, Fink leaves something happy for the audience to hold on to, which is part of what makes their music so appealing.

So far, Noah and the Whale has appeared in many festivals, including Leeds, Latitude, SXSW, V Festival and Glastonbury. "5 Years Time" has also been used in both Topshop and Starbucks advertisement campaigns. The band had planned a 2008 tour of the United States, but timing and the development of a new record forced them to cancel. It was to take place around the time of Lollapalooza. Perhaps spring 2009 will see the arrival of this up and coming band — stay tuned! ☼



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ART

Formal Dressing 101 OLIVIA KUPFER
Staff Writer

There is no time of the year more stressful than the holiday season. First there's final exams, then those family obligations and finally there's the question of finding that perfect formal frock. What can be more anxiety provoking than finding the perfect holiday cocktail dress for all of these momentous occasions? OK, this may be a slight exaggeration because you don't have to dress up for finals (even though I believe you test better when you feel and look great). But exams aside, if you do have to dress for a formal and are in desperate need of fashion advice, you need look no further than this list. This holiday season, I'm replacing the dressing room hassle with the click of a button (thank you online shopping). With this guide to the hottest holiday fashion trends, selecting the perfect cocktail dress for formals should be a snap.

Silver bells — A major trend for this year's holiday dresses is silver. What color is more elegant, festive and winter-appropriate than silver? Metallic

is perfect for the winter season because its sheen helps you look less pasty and tries to mimic that summery glow. Pick any silver shade, from gunmetal to pewter which looks very flattering on those with fair skin or even bright metallic silver for those blessed with the appearance of year-round tans. This season's popular strapless cut is a good choice for a silver dress. The look is young and fresh and a great option for a formal affair.

Holiday goddess — If you're a free spirited neo-hippie who values effortless chic clothing over a restrictive, cinched-waist dress, try a draped and Greek goddess-inspired gown. Channel your inner-goddess in a one shoulder, knee-length dress that accentuates your clavicle while still leaving something to the imagination. One shoulder is the season's perfect neckline because it's seductive but sophisticated. Try T-bags' colorblock one-shoulder dress for a modern take on the Grecian goddess look.

Unique wrapping — All holiday cocktail dresses rely on dramatic fabrics, materials and embellishments in order to compliment the festive holiday season. That means that this winter, even if you wear a black dress to formal, try one of the season's fashion trends as an accent. Some popular accents this season include feathers, a pronounced, oversized bow, or tiered ruffles on a cocktail dress. An oversized bow on the typical little black dress looks festive and unique, rather than trite and predictable. By pairing this holiday season's mini-dress with girlish

and feminine details, you'll add fashion and fun to a piece that could otherwise veer into the categories of boring, or worse, classless.

Sequins galore — In the event that you can't find a dress that corresponds to any of the trends mentioned above, pick an all-sequined mini-dress. A fitted, tastefully short, jewel-toned sequin dress is guaranteed to make you a showstopper. And at any kind of formal, that's obviously the desired result. ❧



Cat Deeley wearing a one-shoulder. flickr.com



cherryontopshop.com



flickr.com

Go on — embrace the Black Friday bonanza

HOLLY MEEHL
Staff Writer

Thanksgiving is over, but the holiday season is just beginning — and with it comes holiday shopping. It starts with a day that makes many people cringe, yet has bargain hunters drooling: the dreaded, the anticipated, the Black Friday.

We all have most likely experienced Black Friday's craziness at least once. For some, the experience of being a 7-year-old dragged

along by our sale-rabid mom eliminated the possibility of ever entering a mall on Black Friday. For others, Black Friday may be their favorite shopping day of the year with the 50 percent-off posters or the "buy one get one free" chant many retailers promote. Personally, I try to avoid the mall during this particular Friday, and I instead choose to watch various Christmas movies from my comfortable couch. However, this year I decided to take to my local

mall and do a little research about Black Friday. Would the shopping go so smoothly with the economy going so poorly?

I drove to the mall in the afternoon (I wasn't about to wake up at 4 in the morning like many), though I quickly found myself regretting that choice as I looked upon the overflowing parking lot. I had to circle for 15 minutes before I found a spot, and I even witnessed a collision between an SUV and sedan trying to get to the sales a little too quickly. Happy that I avoided such a Black Friday fate, I entered the mall eager to chat with some store managers about how their sales had been going. What I found is that no one really wanted to talk to me.

At last I came upon one surprisingly calm sales representative in Gap Kids who told me his take on this year's Black Friday, "The way I see it, we're having more shoppers than ever, but people are spending less." So paradoxically, people are swarming to the shopping malls to get some of the great deals because they don't want to be spending much money at all.

Who knows for sure, but I learned that Black Friday at the mall is way too hectic a place for me. Despite all the great deals, I'll be doing my Christmas shopping a little bit later when the bargain hunters and sales reps won't add onto mounting holiday stress. ❧



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Christmas starts early this year for Starbucks lovers

New Starbucks flavors arrive on time for winter.

ANA ALVAREZ
Staff Reporter

As a resident of Miami, I'm always searching for a way to keep warm during the Nashville winter season. Whether it's inside my 80-degree dorm room or underneath layers of clothing, I always find a way to stay cozy. One solution I've found to combat the cold is Starbucks.

I never lose an opportunity to buy a cup and feel the soothing warmth of the coffee after every sumptuous sip. That rich, earthy smell of coffee in the morning is the little bit of heaven I need to keep me awake for the rest of the day.

Recently, I tried the gingersnap latte that Starbucks serves almost every Christmas season. "But we just celebrated Thanksgiving!" you may exclaim. What's with all the commercialism? I have to say, back in November I thought it was pretty early for Starbucks to be selling coffee in those famous "red cups." But as temperatures drop and the holiday season rolls our way, the time seems right to promote that toasty, homey feeling.

Ashley Young, general supervisor at the Starbucks in the Student Life Center, said if students thought the holiday cups appeared earlier this year, they were right.

"This year, we started selling the cups on Nov. 4 rather than Nov. 27 as in previous years. There is no real reason behind it that I've heard of," she says.

Each year, Starbucks presents artwork on the cups that follows a holiday theme.

"The cups are always different. We like to focus on the artwork more than anything, which is why they don't have quotes like the regular cups." Young said. "If there is an increase in sales, it's usually attributed to people getting into the season and wanting to take some home to their families. People usually buy somatic types of coffee, but they get into the themes and the new blends."

The first Christmas blend ever was released in 1984. It features a mix of Latin American and Asian/Pacific coffee along with rare and aged Indonesian beans. The exotic and spicy lure of the blend made customers want to buy it by the pound. Today, new flavors such as the gingersnap latte, peppermint mocha twist and espresso truffle are popular drinks as customers look for alternatives to the traditional combination.

With so many new holiday offerings, it can be difficult to choose

the right drink for that chilly day. Each is very different, so when you're trying to choose, consider what kind of flavor you're looking for in your steamy beverage. If you are in the market for a creamy drink with the added kick of crystallized ginger, go for the gingersnap latte. Prefer the taste of mint, bittersweet chocolate and coffee flavor? Then the peppermint mocha twist is for you. If you need that early morning eye-opener to make it through the last full week of early classes, try espresso with Starbucks' European-style cocoa. Whichever one you choose, these holiday delights leave little room for disappointment. ❧



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Christmas shopping at the bookstore

EILEEN BEGLEY
Staff Writer

It is officially the holidays, a favorite time of the year for college students, especially for girls. We have already made our Christmas lists in hopes that our dads, brothers and boyfriends will buy us a Tiffany necklace or cashmere sweater. But they don't, because men are the worst gift-givers since Aunt Betty and her monogrammed hats.

So for all the men in Nashville, I found some gifts that you can buy at the bookstore on the Card for your favorite female. Here's your cheat sheet:

An animal sound alarm clock

As someone who sleeps through many a fire alarm, I would definitely love this pink pig alarm clock. Almost every girl loves the color pink and there's a cute pig on it. The

best part about this adorable gift is that it oinks. Now, she'll never have an excuse when she's late to meet you. It also comes as a dog or rooster alarm clock for only \$19.95.

Vanderbilt sweatshirt

Your girlfriend's closet may be full of Vanderbilt apparel, but your mom's closet is always ready for another Vanderbilt sweatshirt. Every Vandy mom loves to show off her child's school. Another sweatshirt is just another reason to tell the world that her child is a Commodore. And if your parents live above the Mason-Dixon line, the perennial cold weather will guarantee that she

will wear your gift all the time. Vanderbilt sweatshirts come in all sorts of styles, colors and prices.

Teddy bears or any other stuffed animal

I wouldn't call myself a stuffed animal fanatic, but I would be more than pleased with these pink-garbed teddy bears. Who can't resist a cute teddy bear or a stuffed giraffe? This is the perfect gift for your girlfriend, little sister or niece. It is something soft and cuddly that will always remind her of her favorite guy. Like sweatshirts, the bookstore has many different kinds of stuffed animals who wear many different outfits. And they're also cheap at \$15.



global-b2b-network.com

Vera Bradley ID Case/Wristlet

If you go to the bookstore often, you'll notice that near the women's section there is a huge display of quilted bags. If you're a guy, you probably immediately disregard it and head right upstairs to buy souvenir shot glasses and beer mugs. But whenever my friends and I explore the bookstore, we always stop by the Vera Bradley section. Almost every time my friend says, "I would love that ID holder so much. I finally would stop losing my ID and key."

If you know a girl who always misplaces her ID card after a night of holiday frat parties, buy her this gift! It will save her \$10 each time she goes to the Card office to buy a new one. Plus, you'll never have to hear her complain at brunch the next morning about not having her Card to use.



marshalljewelry.com

Jewelry

The bookstore is a place where you buy textbooks, endless amounts of Vanderbilt apparel and school supplies. But did you also know they sell jewelry? And it is not Vanderbilt-themed jewelry. On the second floor, behind the greeting cards section, a mecca of jewelry exists. The jewelry comes in all sorts of varieties from simple earrings to artistic necklaces. There are pearl stud earrings for a middle school-aged sister and brightly colored necklaces for your outgoing girlfriend. ❧

The KNUX

CHRIS GEARING
Features Editor

New Orleans may not be the city that jumps to mind when someone mentions rap, but the Big Easy is home to two of the best rappers on the hip-hop scene today. They are The Knux, and they use instruments to craft their own brand of rap (in opposition to say T-Pain or Lil' Wayne). One of the brothers, Rah Almillio, sat down with Features Editor Chris Gearing to discuss Hurricane Katrina, positive messages and fighting with the crowd at live shows.

Versus Magazine: How did you guys get into music?

Rah Almillio: We've been doing music since we were like 12 or 13. We used to play in jazz band and we started off playing brass instruments, reading and writing sheet music, and stuff like that. We've always been into hip-hop just being young and black and in the hood, you know what I mean? We started real, real young.

VM: What are your top three musical influences?

RA: I cannot name that. Too many artists in too many genres, virtually impossible.

VM: OK, well how about what's currently playing on your iPod?

RA: My brother, Krispy, is currently listening to, I think ... I think it was like some old album. I am currently listening to the new Portishead record, which I didn't like at first but now I like. It was putting me to sleep, but now it's starting to grow on me a little bit. Oh yeah, the new Beck is crazy too. Danger Mouse did his thing on that motherf**ker. For real.

VM: You guys describe yourselves as being from "Hollywood-via-New Orleans." What does that mean and how has it affected your music?

RA: It just means we moved from New Orleans to Hollywood (laughs). We moved out there a couple of years ago. They embraced us in Hollywood, and we used that New Orleans hustle and muscle. So it became like our second home, you know? It didn't really influence the music, but it influenced the album. It's definitely a Hollywood album.

VM: Where did the name "The Knux" come from?

RA: Knux is short for "The Knuckleheads." Back in New Orleans, we used to be a big ass group called The Knuckleheads, and it's just shortened down to me and my brother. The other guys weren't around, but me and my brother were the only rappers. We shortened it due to some copyrighting s**t, and due to everyone in the industry with short d**n names. We've been in the industry for a while — we used to write hooks and s**t. I was 18, 19 and my brother was like 20-something — we used to write songs and produce. People were like, "We're with The Knux!" and we were like "Motherf**cker, we're The Knuckleheads!" Everyone called us The Knux around LA, and so we were like, "F**k it." Plus, it sounds like a crazy ass punk band.

VM: Songs like "Bang Bang" and "Cappuccino" have some very interesting lyrics — how do you guys write your song lyrics?

RA: Y'know, writing songs ... you know what's crazy, a lot of the songs start off with just the music. Being that we're producers, we'd start just jamming out, just kind of going for it. That's why the album sounds like that — we produce so many genres of music. When we do something, it won't necessarily be for The Knux. Then we put some lyrics on it, and it's one of our songs. It's never like, "Let's do a rock song!" You know what I mean? If it just sounds like Knux material, then we put it under that umbrella. We didn't contrive none of that. Basically, lyrics come after the music. You can just hear it, the music kind of speaks. This sounds like this, and this sounds like that.

"Bang Bang" was just like crazy, "Yo, I can just hear guns blazing." You can hear it, y'know?

After you hear it, it makes perfect sense. It's just the feeling.

We have a pretty deep message in our songs — we cover it up with our catchy s**t. Every last one of our songs has a message to it, but we try to do it without being corny. "Put the guns down! Be positive!" Trying not to kill the art of it. "Cappuccino" was just like, we had a coffee shop under our apartment. If everyone knows Sunset and Vine in Hollywood, there's like a Borders there. I got coffee in the morning, and one morning I came in and I was doing this riff on the guitar. I had coffee in my hand, and Krispy was just like, "Yo, I need a fresh cappuccino with a mocha twist." I was like, "That's pretty ill." We played it for some people, and they said like, "That s**t is crazy." When we made the lyrics we made it pretty abstract. He came from one perspective and I came from mine. We want everyone to take something from the music, not just box it in with lyrics. Some people think of women with that song, but it's just coffee.

VM: I know you guys were in New Orleans around the time that Katrina hit. How has that experience affected you?

RA: We came back from a writing session and the day of, we came back to an evacuation. We only had the things we packed in LA, and they said we had to leave the city. Nobody ever leaves for the hurricanes, so something this time made us say, "Well, let's just leave." So we went to Dallas, and we came back and we found that we couldn't get back into the city. A good six months of not being able to come back with only the belongings we had from LA. So it was pretty crazy. When we finally got back into the city, we found our apartment burned down so we didn't have anything. We pretty much had to start over from scratch. But it's cool.

VM: Where did the idea for the music video for "Bang Bang" come from?

RA: I wrote that. I actually have a production company, and I'm actually going to start putting out indie films and s**t like that. I wrote the treatment for that video, and I approached the director and was just like, "Yo man, I know you have a track record but I can't have it any other way." He read it and didn't even want to add to it. I was thinking about how the song sounded. I listened to it and was like, "Let's put these two gangs together." They're fighting without guns, but I don't know if you've seen the dramatic one where the kid dies at the end. He gets shot and when the gun shot rings out it's like "Oh s**t!"

These gangs have been fighting for so long it doesn't matter anymore after this kid dies. It's kind of the message in the song, too. It's something we had to deal with in New Orleans. We didn't want to take it to the hood. People are tired of seeing the same s**t. People are tired of seeing the same videos over and over. They want to see something entertaining. Every video we do will be something different, we won't do anything with a f**king green screen. No "look how cool I am, one pose" the entire video.

VM: It seems like you guys mix a lot of traditional instruments (guitars, drums, etc.) instead of using prefabricated beats or synthesized music like other rappers. Why's that?

RA: We have beats, we have break beats. But we play so many different instruments, it would've killed us if we had done anything less. We didn't try to do it, but we have so many instruments. We couldn't count on our lyrical ability. We wanted to just please ourselves — we wouldn't have been satisfied with just beats and rapping. We like to consider ourselves producers as opposed to "beat makers." Production versus "Oh cool, that's a cool beat." We need to get clear about who's a beat maker and who's a producer.

VM: I hear that you have really crazy live shows — any good stories?

RA: Oh, I have crazy stories. (laughs) It's like punk shows, we talk to hip-hop guys and we wear dirty Chuck Taylors all day cause we get dirty. If you don't want to get your s**t f**ked up, don't come to our shows. But one time, I tried to do the f**king stage dive s**t. The whole Johnny Rotten, but when I jumped I tripped over my cord and fell like f**king mad. The stage was so high I feel between the barricade and the stage. But I got back up and I had hit my head. I picked up the mic and went right back into it. Another time, Wesley kicked somebody's ass and then rocked the show right after, just murdered the show. The energy was so high after that fight — we just want to bring a raw element to hip-hop. Live shows right now are so blah. Not entertaining at all. I come from a fan's point of view and try to give everyone what they paid for — a show. ☹

LETTER FROM AN ANGRY WASP

Each week, our resident Angry WASP sounds off on things that make him buzz. (see what we did there?)



Dear Awkward Airport Conversations,

You know those little awkward exchanges in the airport where you see somebody you know when you're flying somewhere and you feel like you should say something, but then once you do you realize that you really don't know them that well, but you've now initiated conversation so you have to say something more than hello? Yeah, well, to that conversation: I hate you.

You happen to pop up at the most susceptible times — right when I've got nowhere to go, sitting in the terminal waiting for my flight. It takes me a minute to decide whether I could have a meaningful talk with someone who I kind of know, maybe that girl who I have class with or that person I recognize from the time at the place with the people. You know the one. Anyway, you just have this way of popping up when eye contact and recognition is made.

Here on campus, a simple "hello" would be fine, because we already acknowledge that we go to Vanderbilt. But in a different city's airport, you become necessary out of the, "Oh isn't this weird we're so far away from campus." And that's about where your conversing material begins and ends. And so it inevitably ends with the oh-so-solid, "So ... you looking forward to coming back?" after starting with the, "So ... how was your break?" And even though I know that this is not a meaningful conversation, and I know it's just as awkward for the other person, somehow I just can't keep from bringing you back time and time again.

So please, awkward airport conversations, here are your new options: Give me something to work with. Let me run into somebody I know better. Or would like to know better. Or better yet, let me travel in peace.

Sincerely,
An Angry WASP



FLIP SIDE

OVERHEARD

Some people on this campus just don't think before they speak. Sometimes we are lucky enough to overhear what they say.



Compiled from the Facebook group "Overheard at Vanderbilt"



Professor: "Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder."

Girl 1: "What's that on your eye? Is that from airplane turbulence?"

Girl 2: "Um, it's a hickie."

(In a discussion regarding Islam)

Guy: "Yeah, and didn't Mohammed like fly his carpet over the mountains?"

Girl: "Um ... I think that was Aladdin."

Professor: "This is not a sexy argument."

Guy: "So, I had the weirdest dream. I dreamt that all of the pathways at Vanderbilt were covered in marinara sauce. And the only thing that I could think of was where I could find some bread sticks. Is that a normal dream?"

Girl: "C.T. West. ... Is that in Towers East or Towers West?"

Girl 1: "I'm going to marry him."

Girl 2: "But isn't he already married?"

Girl 1: "Well, yeah ... but car accidents happen!"

Professor: "Let's talk about bad decisions. This morning I blew my nose on my towel."

Girl: "Having sex with a ghost ... that's definitely a new fantasy of mine."



PHOTOS: www.flickr.com

HOROSCOPES



SAGITTARIUS 11/22-12/21: You get no special rights because it's "your birthday month." Sorry.



CAPRICORN 12/22-1/19: If you have to say "trust me," it probably isn't a good idea. Trust me.



AQUARIUS 1/20-2/18: You'd better give Sagittarius some tips, man.



PISCES 2/19-3/20: My favorite is apple pisces.



ARIES 3/21-4/19: Your string of bad luck will come to an end. If you stop asking us to make your horoscopes better, that is.



TAURUS 4/20-5/20: To save money, you could go to a semi-semi-formal. That means putting on a collared shirt and going to Chili's. Classy.



GEMINI 5/21-6/21: You need to find somebody for whom "all I want for Christmas is you" is true. That way, you can save a lot of money on presents.



CANCER 6/22-7/22: In the spirit of Christmas, you should volunteer somewhere new this week. It will make you feel better about all the drinking you've been doing.



LEO 7/23-8/22:

You may want to be a vampire, but don't do it. It sucks. Like this joke, but literally.



VIRGO 8/23-9/22:

Christmas is the best season for songwriting. If you run out of words, you can just put in a good "falalalala" and you'll make millions.



LIBRA 9/23-10/22: The online love horoscope is giving you zero out of three hearts for this weekend. Grab some ice cream and depressing movies on your way back from the library Friday night.



SCORPIO 10/23-11/21: "Love Actually," though set at Christmastime, is not a Christmas movie. But you'll still watch it five times this month.



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