Fatal Seasons

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Non-Swattie Wide-Spread, not Really
Panicked at All

By Dan Sachar

When I heard that Widespread Panic was coming to play at Swat, I didn't know exactly what to think. I'll be honest with you, I knew none of their music, but their name caught my attention. Is it a homemade tape? Is it a real band? When I then received a copy of their latest CD, Ain't Life Grand, and new visions entered my head: Tie-dye-free love; Jerry Garcia ties; long, mellow guitar solos. This mellow-ness descended on campus last Friday in a concert which turned out to be a lot less of a big deal than people thought it would be.

So, I wake up on the big day, yawning, stretch, open my shades and... AAARGH!! RAIN!!!! The concert that night was supposed to be held outdoors, but Mother Nature had different plans. My vision of Parrish Beach becoming a big Woodstock was eliminated pretty quickly. The entire Thursday before the show, loungers on the beach got to watch the intricate process of setting-up a large outdoor stage. Well, much to SAC's chagrin, that effort was all for naught and most of the backpackers which went to setting-up that stage were washed away with the rain.

So, the concert was indoors. No big deal. Around 6:55 p.m. on Friday night, I entered Terrace All-Campus Space to find a surprisingly light crowd just hanging around. I also began to notice a lot of non-Swattie invaders. To make sure we got a good spot for the show, my roommate, Bryan Berg, and I ran right up to the front of the stage and staked our positions next to a lot of people we didn't recognize. From the way these people kept saying "Hey, man, we got to get ourselves some nice tunes, but nothing too mellow guitar solos..." I guessed they were high-school fans of Widespread Panic. Apparently, most of the crowd didn't know exactly what to think. I'll be honest with you, I knew none of their music, but their name con-"I never heard of Widespread Panic, but hey, a gig's a gig." The bassist's parents' reaction to Widespread Panic: "People were so nice here, so orderly, not all that beer drinking and crazy stuff going on." And, my favorite, the band's guitarist, Eugene Sont on the intricacies of home-brewing beer, "In the end, I had a good time, but I wonder about Widespread Panic. Since all the money was spent for Swart students, and most people there were not, is it really worth all that trouble? Should a different band have been invited? The lines of communication between SAC and the student body be opened more so that we can have more of a say in who to bring again?"

Maybe so, but an event's an event, and even the mellow Widespread Panic was able to bring a little excitement to the campus. The yearour manager came to me and told me I could hang with the band, but not to say I was from the press. So, I made my way backstage (Parrish) and found the band, a few friends and family, and a few other Swat fans chilling out and talking. I spent over an hour talking to the band, and here were some of the highlights:

1) "I've never heard of Widespread Panic, but hey, a gig's a gig." The bassist's parents' reaction to Widespread Panic: "People were so nice here, so orderly, not all that beer drinking and crazy stuff going on."
2) The bassist talking about the dangers of computer viruses and the need to protect your files.
3) My question to the drummer, who was somewhat, shall we say, out of it: "So, did you enjoy performing here?" His response: "Hmmm..."
4) The bassist's parents' reaction to Widespread Panic: "People were so nice here, so orderly, not all that beer drinking and crazy stuff going on."
5) And, my favorite, the band's guitarist Eugene Sont on the intricacies of home-brewing beer, "In the end, I had a good time, but I wonder about Widespread Panic. Since all the money was spent for Swart students, and most people were not, is it really worth all that trouble? Should a different band have been invited? The lines of communication between SAC and the student body be opened more so that we can have more of a say in who to bring again?"

But I'm not. It was called donor. It had good acting, a funny, original script, and a pleasant, low-key style that made it a pleasure to watch. No, really.

"All that's irrelevant, though, as the Barry Levinson who makes movies now is a whole different kind of a director, maybe the original Levinson's Bizaro duplicate. "Me make crappy film," says Bizarro Barry. "Me hope it make money."

The new Barry moves moves like Bugsy and the object under scrutiny here, Disclosure. Those who were offended by the fact that the first major Hollywood picture about sexual harassment was about a man getting harassed by his female boss needn't worry; Disclosure is far too incoherent and stupid a film to influence anyone's thinking. The dialogue is wholly moronic, featuring such gems as "But men and women are different!" The acting—well, what would you expect the acting to be like in a movie that starts Michael Douglas and Demi Moore? Moore plays a bitch and Douglas plays a schmuck, so the roles aren't a much of a stretch, but it doesn't help. Disclosure starts off offensive enough, with Michael Douglas reprising his role as the Little Bo Peep of white male America, but it quickly degenerates into a generic thriller. Everyone's out to get poor Mikey, and he has to save his butt all by his lonesome. Frankly, having seen Basic Instinct, it doesn't look like his butt's worth saving. Disclosure shows Saturday in DuPont.

Ballroom Steps on Your Toes

Strictly Ballroom stars Paul Mercurio (Priscilla, Queen of the Desert) as Scott, a dancer determined to defy the authorities and dance his own steps at the upcoming ballroom dance competition. Even if you haven't seen Strictly Ballroom, you know where things go from there, especially after Tara Morice shows up as Fran, the clumsy, homely girl who desperately wants to dance with Scott. (Morice even looks like Jennifer Grey, Dancing's female star).

Since the plot is so obvious, Strictly Ballroom has to get by on style, which produces mixed results. Australian comedies aren't known for their subtlety (think Young Einstein) and Ballroom isn't likely to change that. It's hideously corny at times, achieving a kind of desperate camp—which ought to be an oxymoron. The director, Baz Luhrmann, seems to think that the actors' already hammy performances would be even funnier if he put the camera three inches in front of their faces. He's not correct.

But Morice and Mercurio make a cute couple, and some of their scenes together are actually pretty sweet. How much you like Strictly Ballroom depends on your tolerance for formulas and overacting, and your ability to sit through an hour of dreck just to stop half an hour of cute stuff. Strictly Ballroom plays Friday in the LPHC.

You young'uns might not believe it, but Barry Levinson actually made a good movie once. "The direc-