

Dave Matthews Band: Not a "Typical" group

by Ryan Bogart
Collegian Staff

If all that you've heard of Dave Matthews Band are the songs on the radio, you're cheating yourself out.

At first they seem to be the typical pop band you hear on the radio every time you're in your car. But listening to them and reading their lyrics made me realize that they are actually sending out messages. The best way to describe their words would have to be inspirational.

It seems that this band from Virginia almost relates to the folk groups in the sixties with their messages being played in coffee shops around America.

They're the 90's version of folk singers. Singing about how we would all be better off if we were more friendly towards each other.

"Ants Marching" is about how all anybody seems to be doing is conforming. It suggests that we shouldn't just conform, but be our own person: there are so

many rules and laws that we abide by in our everyday lives.

It's as if Dave Matthews sees this as society's way of controlling us and they sing out their protest.

A line from "Typical Situation" is "Everybody's happy, everybody's free."

This sets the perfect tone for the band and the album. In this line is the basis of the lyrics and how the songs are written.

"Under the Table and Dreaming" is the third CD that these Virginians have released. Their crisp, clean sound is enjoyable for practically anyone to listen to. The use of the flute, sax, and violins generates a mood that well accompanies their inspirational lyrics.

The unique sound could just be the the beginning of the end for grunge rock. Wouldn't it be great if instead of hearing about suicide, drugs, and killings, we heard about being your own person, treating each other right, and to ignore conformity.

Merchant: not a Maniac

by Colette Rethage
Collegian Staff

After many successful albums and tours, Natalie Merchant left 10,000 Maniacs to pursue a solo career.

The Maniacs were one of the first "do-it-your-own-way" bands in the mid '80's. Merchant left after two of the most successful albums in terms of sales for the Maniacs.

"10,000 Maniacs unplugged" and "Exit to Eden" pushed the band to front of the music scene

in the '80's and '90's. Both of the multi-platinum albums marked the beginning of the end for the band.

Her first solo album, "Tigerlily" came out this summer, and is doing quite well on the alternative music charts.

It is a melodic, mellow, feel-good album that Maniac fans are sure to love.

You may have already been drawn in by the first release, "Carnival", which has its fair share of play on the radio and MTV. But "Carnival" is just a

sample of the different styles of songwriting by Merchant.

Others include "Seven Years," a slow, gripping tune, "Wonder," my personal favorite, and "River," a song written for and about the death of River Phoenix.

"Tigerlily" is comparable to the albums by 10,000 Maniacs, but only because Merchant was the strength of the group.

The only difference may be that "Tigerlily" is a bit more mellow. Merchant alone draws an audience by her strong, powerful voice, killer lyrics, and serious music.

Sponge soaks up success

by Joe Mottillo
Entertainment editor

With the release of "Rotting Pinata," Sponge burst onto the scene in a huge way.

This five-man band out of Michigan has a sound that crosses a Seattle grunge (Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, etc.) with that of a midwestern alternative flavor (Smashing Pumpkins and Secret Goldfish).

The mix of the two styles creates a very interesting album.

The first single was the sixth track, "Plowed." With a great guitar lead intro and Vinnie's echo of "say a prayer for me," the song can't help but make you

want to start to mosh. It just gets you pumped up.

The second single was "Molly." The song starts out slow, but picks up with great lead and accompanying vocals. The song is about the Molly Ringwald movie, "16 Candles."

Both of the singles have received extensive airplay on the radio and videoplay on MTV.

Some of my other favorite songs are "Fields," a slower track; "Rotting Pinata," a song with the same intensity as "Plowed"; and "Neenah Menasha," a song that puts the band up at the top of the list with any grunge act.

All the songs on "Rotting

Pinata" were written, arranged, and produced by Sponge. Sponge has been opening for various bands the last few months in support of the album.

The members of the band are: lead vocalist, Vinnie; Mike Cross and Joe Mazzola, guitars; Tim Cross, bass; and Jimmy Paluzzi, drums and vocals. Sponge will be back in the studio in 1996 to record the follow-up to "Rotting Pinata."

The album is of very high quality. The music is great and refreshing because of the mixture of heavy guitar and bass.

Sponge is definitely a band that has made its mark in the 90's music scene.

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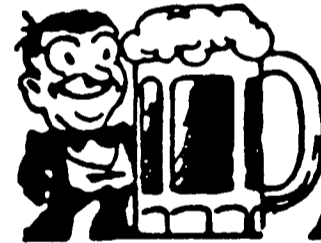
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