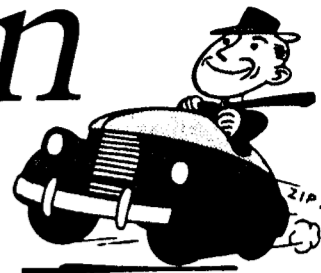


New tour makes for long days

R'Erin To Go



by Erin McCarty

by Deanna Symoski
a&e editor

It's a mad, mad, mad, mad season for yourself or someone like you

"You realize this isn't brain surgery we're doing up here," Rob Thomas, lead singer of Matchbox Twenty, told the sold-out Mellon Arena in Pittsburgh last Friday night. "We're not curing cancer, either. We're just some dickheads in a band."

It is that humility that has allowed the music of Matchbox Twenty to speak for itself. The band, currently on tour with Lifehouse and Everclear, is free of flashy special effects and gimmicks, except for Thomas's classic lead-singer good looks, and gives off the impression that they are completely at home just playin' some songs.

"If you wanna get up and dance or just sit back and listen, it's cool. We're gonna play some music, so just have fun," Thomas instructed.

With a disco ball spinning and a translucent sheet billowing in that strange breeze arenas always seem to have inside them, silhouettes of the band took the stage. The curtain lifted and Matchbox Twenty officially opened with "Crutch" off their sophomore album *Mad Season*. Thomas took front and center, and for a moment, the collective shrill of teenage girls made it feel like the O-



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town show simultaneously playing at Club M.

But these Rock-and-Rollers are no boy band, as they proved with their second number "Long Day," their first release off the critically-acclaimed *Yourself or Someone Like You* released in 1996. Thomas' voice, the sound of a soul purging itself, passionately flowed against the riffs of guitars that sound like they know something you — and Thomas — don't. It is that thirst in their music that reveals the true purity of their art form. And the crowd understood.

But one gets the impression that regardless of the volume of the cheers, Matchbox Twenty would be happy playing their music just about anywhere. As the piano rolled onto the stage, the mood became immediately more intimate. "You Won't Be Mine" sprinkled over the keys at first, then rolled into the grand epic that summarizes *Mad Season*.

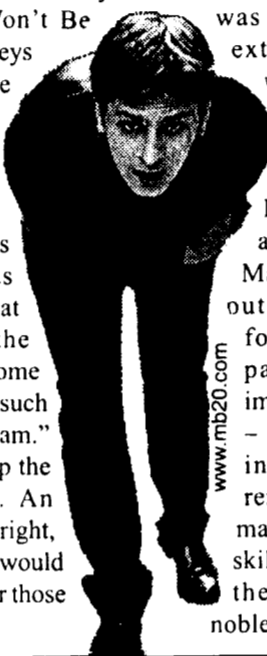
The piano, however, was not to remain for more than two songs unfortunately. It was disappointing, in fact, that the band overlooked the opportunity to perform some of their unreleased pieces, such as the piano version of "3 am." Instead, they opted to keep the show in a faster gear. An impressive pace in its own right, but more acoustic versions would have been a special treat for those

of us who could already sing every song the way it sounds on the album.

Seeing the band live does lend a whole new appreciation for the good songs that airplay bludgeons to death. Far removed from the monotony of the heavy rotation of their first album (so that now you actually want to hear those early songs on the radio), *Mad Season*'s releases are beginning to find the same fate. "If You're Gone," a favorite on local radio, gets taken for granted until witnessing the heart with which the song was originally written. Live versions capture the journey that radio warps into destination.

The play list consisted of the first nine songs off *Mad Season*, everything up to and including "Bent," and "You Won't Be Mine," interspersed with "Real World," "3 am," "Girl Like That" and "Back 2 Good" from *Yourself or Someone Like You*. "Push," also off the debut album, was the first song in an extensive encore that wrapped with a yet-to-be-released cover of "Lonely Weekend" by Neil Young for the Sun Records collaboration album.

Matchbox Twenty turned out a performance that focused on music over pageantry, talent over image. The band is just that — a band, and their insistence upon remembering that not only makes them one of the most skilled acts around, it makes them perhaps the most noble.



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EVER POPULAR

For Alexakis, it's always a good time for a bad attitude

Art Alexakis used to be a rock star. Now the lead singer of Everclear just sings about being one.

There is no life more fitting for a stint on *Behind the Music* than that of Alexakis', and those tumultuous times are well documented in the band's music. It is this bleak, if not honest, songwriting that has kept Everclear on the map.

Their latest release, *Songs from an American Movie Vol. II: Good Time for a Bad Attitude*, hit stores in November of 2000, and brought with it a punk plethora of autobiographical recollection. Songs like "AM Radio," which recalls the simplicity of growing up in a less technical decade, are a little more upbeat than "Father of Mine" and pretty much anything from *So Much for the Afterglow*, which is why Everclear opened with the anti-disco theme on Friday.

With no more than a frowning smiley face on a black curtain as a backdrop, Everclear rolled through a variety of songs and time periods. Touching upon a sampling of everything from *Sparkle and Fade to American Movie Vol. II*, the band delivered a perky set to fuel the crowd. By the end, just as we were watching the world die in "Santa Monica," even those who only came for Matchbox Twenty were bouncing up and down.

by Deanna Symoski



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An Everyday occurrence:

Dave Matthews sells his soul and his sound for mainstream album

by Ainslie Ulmer
public relations manager

After a long weekend with no sleep, I snuggled into my toasty little bed, turned the lights out, and played my new Dave Matthews Band CD, *Everyday*. I was ready for the sexy voice of Dave Matthews to soothe me into a deep sleep, but the first song on the album, "I Did It" forced me to stay awake and sing along. This proved to be the only song I knew the words to. Thanks MTV (by the way, I still don't understand that video).

I listened carefully to the lyrics of each song, trying to make sense of what I was hearing. Okay, I will admit it. I am one of those emotionally challenged individuals who listen to the words of songs and believe that some of them were written to describe the life of Ainslie J. Ulmer. Take some of Dave's oldies, but goodies for example: "Crash," "Say Goodbye" or "Crush." I mean the lyrics in these songs are deep, emotional, and are possibly Dave at his best. But during some of the songs on *Everyday*, I thought to myself, "am I missing something?"

"Angel," "The Space Between," "So Right," and "Dreams of Our Fathers"

will probably grow on me. They have potential, but I had to listen to the CD several times before making that decision. This has formed the basis for much of my criticism. There has not been a Dave Mathews CD yet that I have not loved right from the beginning. I guess there is a first for everything.

So I have come to a conclusion (here comes Ainslie Ulmer, World Problem Solver). I have determined that Dave has sold out. For some reason, Dave has decided to become more public and play MTV specials. He is becoming one of those commercial artists we, the fans, have always praised him for not being. As I listen to some of the songs, I recognize that funky DMB beat trying to peek through, but for the most part *Everyday* is unlike any other Dave Matthews Band CD. A new image, new style, new look... Hey Dave! WASSUP with that?

To all you die-hard Dave fans out there, I apologize for what I am about to say, but possibly the best part of this CD was the insert for Dave Mathews Band merchandise. My white DMB-logo hoodie should arrive any day now.

New Releases

Movies

Exit Wounds
Enemy at the Gates

Video*

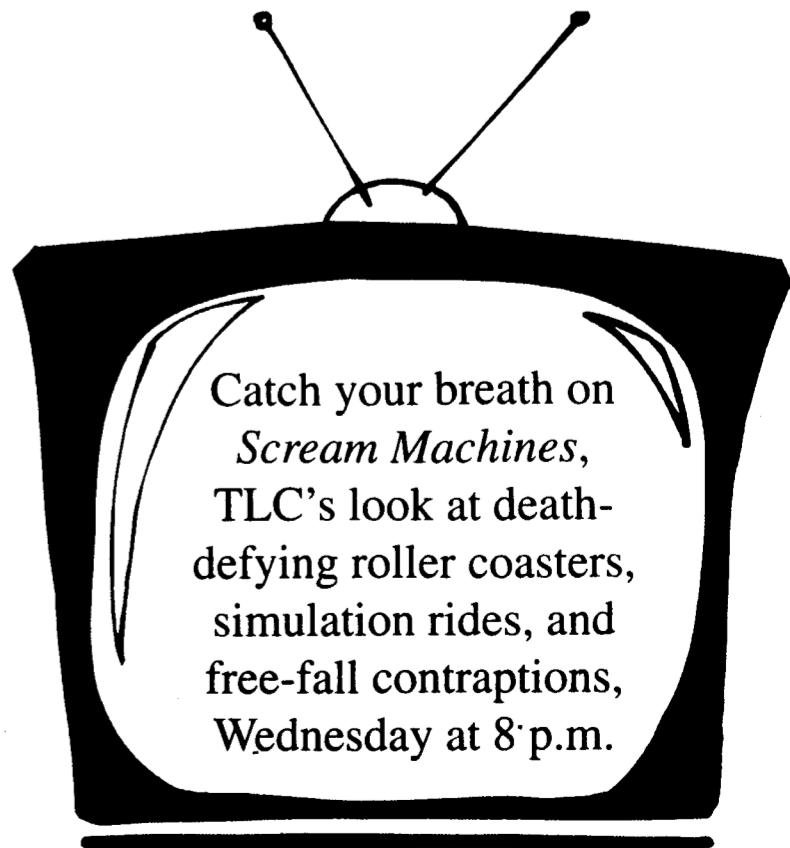
Jesus Christ Superstar
Remember the Titans

Music*

Maxwell
50 Cent
Korn
Mandy Moore

DVD*

Bedknobs and Broomsticks
Dune
Jesus Christ Superstar
Remember the Titans



Catch your breath on *Scream Machines*, TLC's look at death-defying roller coasters, simulation rides, and free-fall contraptions, Wednesday at 8 p.m.

*Release Date: 3/20