

# Ryan Adams demolishes musical boundaries on new CD

by Kevin Fallon  
asst. managing editor

Alt-country star Ryan Adams had plenty of material to work with for his third solo album, "Demolition." Adams took five albums' worth of demo tracks recorded from 2000-01 and reduced it to 13 tracks, all recorded live in the studio.

Adams, former front man of



Whiskeytown, released his first solo album, "Heartbreaker," in 2000. He exploded in 2001 with "Gold," featuring the anthem "New York, New York."

"Demolition" shows off Adams' songwriting gifts. He shifts from rocker to romantic throughout the CD. "This is where the summer ends, in a flash of pure destruction," Adams wails in the opening line of the CD.

The more upbeat alternative songs, such as "Nuclear" and "Starting To Hurt" sound a bit like the Gin Blossoms. On the other hand, the quiet, heartache tunes such as the somber "Cry On Demand" and "Tomorrow" show a softer side to Adams. And "You Will Always Be The Same" echoes the Beatles' "Blackbird."

However, Adams truly shines when he cuts across the rock and country genres. Adams avoids the typical country sound, and is rather a rock artist who is in touch with rock 'n'

roll's country roots. The influence of rock's pioneers such as Hank Williams, Carl Perkins, and young Elvis are heard in the twang of a steel guitar and a hum of harmonica on "Hallelujah," "Dear Chicago," and "Chin Up, Cheer Up."

"Demolition," however, does have some weak spots. "Desire" is a cheesy love song that would sound more at home on the "City of Angels" soundtrack. And it could do without "Jesus (Don't Touch My Baby)," an artsy mood-music flop.

Although "Demolition" does not have as much energy, emotion, or creative spark as "Gold," it still holds its own as an album.

The weaknesses of "Demolition" are few and far between. Overall, "Demolition" reestablishes Adams as one of today's most talented songwriters and shows that even a thrown-together album of demo tracks by Adams beats most music out today.



Ryan Adams walks the line between alternative and country on his newest CD, "Demolition."

# Hannibal returns for dessert in 'Red Dragon'

by Daniel J. Stasiewski  
staff writer

\*\* 1/2 out of \*\*\*\*

Hannibal Lecter is undoubtedly one of the finest, most eccentric villains to ever appear on film. Just as impressive is Anthony Hopkins' consistently sinister portrayal of the appealingly appalling doctor. For those reasons, I find it incredibly hard to say "Red Dragon" has too much Hannibal Lecter.

Many critics said Lecter was overexposed in 2001's "Hannibal," but unlike the "Lamb" sequel, "Red Dragon" isn't a film about the demented doctor. Like "Silence of the Lambs," this film is about an FBI agent's against-the-clock battle to stop a serial killer. Unfortunately, the story of agent Will Graham is lost in the dubious elevation of a worthy fan favorite.

After successfully capturing Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter, a physically and psychologically scarred Graham (Edward Norton) retires from law enforcement. Maniacs,

however, don't retire, and the demand for Graham's investigative skills brings Jack Crawford (Harvey Keitel) to his doorstep. Crawford explains that a series of gruesome murders has left the Bureau stumped. Reluctantly, Graham agrees to help find the serial killer known as "The Tooth Fairy."

Graham quickly uncovers previously overlooked evidence, but it isn't enough to nab the murderer. The only chance Graham has of ever catching "The Tooth Fairy" is to take the case to his old psychiatrist friend, Lecter. Though Lecter nudges Graham in the right direction, it's really Graham who must enter the mind of "The Tooth Fairy" to uncover the killer's identity.

Unknown to Graham, a secretive photo technician named Francis Dolarhyde (Ralph Fiennes) is behind the massacres. While being raised by his unremittingly cruel grandmother, Dolarhyde suffered irreparable emotional damage. Using William Blake's "Red Dragon" painting as his motivation, Dolarhyde attempts to assume the godlike status the dragon embodies. However, a blind co-worker (Emily Watson) begins to draw the man away from the monster. Dolarhyde then faces an internal battle that's all too similar to Agent Graham's external dilemma.

I find myself wanting to reaffirm my adoration of

both the character Hannibal Lecter and the actor Anthony Hopkins. Seeing Hopkins portray Lecter will always be eerily entertaining. Hannibal will never become dull with Hopkins in charge. But in "Red Dragon," it's this love of Hannibal that gets in the way of Graham's story.

Anyone who has seen 1986's "Manhunter" knows how mesmerizing Graham's character can be. "Red Dragon," a remake of "Manhunter," doesn't ever emphasize the character's fight for sanity while dealing with maniacs. Both writer Ted Tally and director Brett Ratner treat Graham like accessory and don't give Norton the room to take the character to the edge.

I'm more surprised by Tally's resistance than that of Ratner. The "Rush Hour" director has never attempted any film as deadly serious as "Red Dragon," which accounts for the insincere, almost laughable treatment of Graham and other minor characters.

Tally, however, should have known better. Even though his connection with Hannibal is as intense as the day he wrote "Silence of the Lambs," Tally can't seem to tell the whole story

with the same concentration. He even serves up a contrived ending (albeit loyal to the novel) that holds its villains in higher regard than the hero.

If "Red Dragon" has one saving grace, it's Ralph Fiennes' terrifying performance as the murderous Francis Dolarhyde. Fiennes is as deeply immersed in the psyche of his maniac as Hopkins is in Hannibal's. He also manufactures a sick sense of sympathy for a man whose crimes rival those of the good doctor. Once Brett Ratner tones down the unnecessarily gory visuals, Fiennes is able to take "The Tooth Fairy" where Norton couldn't take Graham. If the rest of the film weren't so insipid, Fiennes might have had a chance at his overdo Oscar.

I still am a true Hannibal Lecter fan, and would probably sit through "Red Dragon" again. There is just no other character like Lecter in the history of cinema. Even if "Red Dragon" isn't the film it could have been with less Hannibal, I could always watch "Manhunter." For the Lecter-phile in me, "Red Dragon" feeds the insatiable appetite for a cannibalistic psychiatrist and his maniacal mind games.



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Hannibal eyes up his next meal.

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