

STUDENT LIFE

DiFranco: Poet, activist, musician?



PHOTO BY DANNY CINCHI/RIGHTEOUS BABE RECORDS

Ani DiFranco will be performing songs from her new album, "Educated Guess," on Oct. 1 at the Warnre Theatre.

Review by Annie Sevin
staff writer

DiFranco released a new CD in 2004 titled "Educated Guess." This is her 21st album and her most recent as a solo artist. DiFranco isn't just a solo artist like Norah Jones or Josh Groban; she is literally a one-woman show. On the album, she is the only vocal artist and she plays all of the instrumental background, mostly guitar, on her own. DeFranco also recorded and mixed all of the tracks for the latest release from her independent record label, Righteous Babe Records based in Buffalo, N.Y.

In a May interview she did for "The Aquarian Weekly," DiFranco talked about "Educated Guess" as a good experience.

"It was an absolute exorcism for me. Because of that, it's my favorite record that I've made. This record represents a journey back to myself, the self that began writing songs and playing them solo and making little records on her own," said DiFranco.

Also contained in "Educated Guess" is more insight to DiFranco's political stance, which is very liberal.

DiFranco's music, categorized as folk-punk, will not thrill all audiences and she definitely will not entertain most right-wing conservatives. Although DiFranco is a beautifully gifted poet, she is not untalented when it comes to musical ability. Her voice is less than desirable to listen to, and her guitar playing skills are deplorable. Although she is

not the worst artist in the business, her brand of music and her method of expression are just not appealing to most audiences.

On stage, however, she is dynamic and crazy, and she loves playing for her fans as much as her fans love listening to her. Beware if you've never heard her music before or have never seen her in concert; she is not a mainstream pop or rock artist. It is best to already be a fan before you go to the concert or buy the CD.

DiFranco's music and personality seem to coincide perfectly. Her music is brash, energetic, and very straightforward, as is she. As a self-made artist, DiFranco loves to express her independence, individuality, and her political views through her raw music.

DiFranco is a very strong-willed and determined woman who is not afraid to stand up for feminism and individuality. Even if she cannot be respected as a serious musician, she is respectable as a poet and a fighter, even though not everyone agrees with her.

DiFranco is admirable, not for what she believes in, but for the sheer fact that she believes in something and advocates it in a public way. She, as well as other artists, is making laudable attempts to increase the number of registered voters for the upcoming election.

Ani DiFranco, the renowned political activist and spoken-word artist, will perform in Erie at 8:00 p.m. on October 2 at the Warnre Theater on State Street.

Until I say 'I do,' I'd like to do as I please

By Eric Edwards
The Orlando Sentinel
(KRT)

It is no great mystery that as women and men advance into the later stages of a relationship, different expectations begin to roost upon their shoulders.

The most grave of these is the woman's feeling that she's no longer just dating a person whose company she enjoys; she's now interviewing a potential husband candidate.

Interviewees, unfortunately, must undergo a more rigorous screening process than most U.S. Supreme Court nominees.

Once this phase of the relationship has been entered, there's no going back to the cute-couple-hanging-out-enjoying-each-other phase. Now the ammunition is live, and the outcome is do or die.

It's hard for men to say why this magical threshold is crossed or what we do that pushes us over that line from "fun guy" to "better-shape-up-life-time-mate-guy," but once it gets crossed, we can feel its grip. One thing is for sure: We must have done something pretty darn right just to advance ourselves into this round of competition. Unfortunately, once we have gotten into the elimination round, all the points accumulated during earlier rounds are reset to zero. Of course, we won't find this out until we try to cash some saved points in after the clock has been set back.

It is a problem of communication. A woman can make up her mind at any point in the relationship that this is the man she wants to spend her life with so he had better start acting more as if he's in dress rehearsal for husbanding and not in the final stages of bachelorhood. Naturally, she won't vocalize things as clearly as that. She'll drop hints that he won't pick up.

Even when the silly man finally is able to acknowledge that somehow the expectations upon him have been raised like the high jump bar in the last round of the Olympics, his natural instinct is to switch gears into the waning-phases-bachelor-mode rather than to buy a ring, bend a knee and start saving for the honeymoon.

To most women, that is the problem. They think that if we really wanted to be with them, then we would drop all the individual stuff and get on board with "team us." Men, on the other hand, know that "team us" is a seriously long-term position, and while we are looking forward to it, we want it to start when it starts — and not years before that.

I write this now because as I approach yet another birthday, I find myself constantly reminded that it is high time I drop the self-centered immaturity act and get on board "team us."

Perhaps my lady is afraid that I may get too old to be a valuable team member, but mostly I think my age is just a handy cattle prod to get me to act as if I'm a married man even before I am one.

So my message is from us men to the women we love: We want to marry you. In time, we want to start families and do our own versions of the settling-down thing. But until that time comes, we still enjoy doing our own things and it is not in any way a reflection on our levels of devotion to you. When change is upon us, then we will accept it and we will start to appear a little more like the man you had in mind to marry and a little less like the man you met and fell in love with.

In the meantime, bear with us and don't offer up exasperated sighs every time the things we do and the things that you want us to do are not precisely the same things. Just because we may not change as quickly or as much as you had imagined we would, we'll still change.

Students receive free music

By Jeffery Smen
staff writer

The symbol of a green-eyed cat wearing headphones started an online music revolution and now that same revolution is at Penn State. With everyone's favorite songs from "Adema" to "The Used," Napster is a service worth downloading. To download the program, go to <http://www.napster.psu.edu>.

This is a free service for on-campus and off-campus students because Napster is included in the Information Technology Fee students pay the beginning of every semester. Users can download over 800,000 songs, but it does cost to burn a song to a CD. Each song downloaded for burning costs ninety-nine cents, where as an entire album starts at \$9.99.

So why did Penn State decide to subscribe Napster for all students? While it is against the law to download music without copyright permission, Penn State feels that it is also unethical to "pirate" music. Penn State found that Napster was its best solution to the problem after testing out several other music providing programs. Students can use other services such as MusicMatch and iTunes as long as they agree to pay for songs they download. Penn State is the first university in the world to provide such a service for its students.

As a Penn State user, students have access to stream or download certain songs, as well as listen to various radio stations and chat with other Napster users on the message boards. From radio stations like "Buzz," which plays party anthems, "Slacker," which plays 90s alternative, or "Suburbia," that plays punk rock,

Napster features over fifty commercial free stations that anyone can enjoy. "Fuzz," Napster's online magazine, has music articles for fans of any genre to read about their favorite artist.

Napster also offers various new tracks that are not yet available. For example, Jimmy Eat World's new single, "Pain," is available to listen to before their new album hits stores. Some songs from artists like Korn and The Beastie Boys aren't available at all unless you purchase their songs. Many new albums also aren't available unless users pay for individual tracks or the whole album. Users can download or stream songs that are labeled as "Buy Track." Songs labeled in red as "buy only," must be bought to be listened to in full.

Carl Opet said, "I think it's great that we have it, but I'm a little disappointed they don't have as many older albums like Led Zeppelin."

"I think it's a waste of Penn State's money because I can't get all the songs available from Napster," said Jared Cullen.

"I love it, but I downloaded so many songs that my internet connection was reduced to 56k for one week," said Craig Bilecki.

Napster supports all Windows users who are running Windows 2000 and XP and, with certain software, will support Macintosh users. Napster does not support Windows ME or 98. Students who cannot support Napster on their systems can go to various computers on campus to stream music under a created account. Downloading songs over the Penn State network is very fast, and off-campus students shouldn't have a problem downloading on even a 56k modem. Check out the Napster website for any questions and technical support.

Have a story idea? Let us know!
E-mail behrendbeacon5@aol.com



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