

STUDENT LIFE

Ben Kweller's sound matures on third album



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Kweller's third LP came out September 19, 2006.

By Ryan Gallagher
contributing writer

When Ben Kweller released his first solo LP in 2002, it sounded as if Rivers Cuomo turned into Ben Folds for a day and decided to bring a whole new sound to modern music. While some may say that this is impossible, be sure to pick up *Sha Sha* immediately and then write your apologies.

Last month, Kweller released his third album, a self-titled, catchy piece of work that proves he is getting better and better at his solo act. Unlike his previous albums, Kweller takes on the task of playing all the instruments, which is truly what defines a solo artist.

Still maintaining the Ben Folds-style from *Sha Sha* while incorporating the classic style from *On My Way*, Kweller has lived up to his reputation of having a fresh, unique sound that made him stick out in the first place. On a number of his songs,

he starts to hit an older style comparable to Tom Petty or any other band that comes to mind when hearing a name such as Petty or Dylan. Now put a name like Folds with that, plus a Conor Oberst way of pushing the lyrics into your head like no other, and you get Ben Kweller.

The songs range from a feel-good, upbeat jam to a slow, emotional sound that is better than anything you'll hear on the radio. The final song on the album "This is War," reveals a completely different sound than his normal style, but shows that he can produce a playlist on all of his albums that will always keep you guessing. The transition from the song "Thirteen" to the follow-up track entitled "Penny on the Tracks," illustrates how he keeps this style strong and original.

If you are sick of the bad music that consistently fills up the radio and for the most part television, listen to Kweller just once and you'll be intrigued and wanting more.

On September 21, Kweller jammed on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," performing his hit "Sundress" and had an exceptional performance. Kweller had a crew with him for the complete sound. Starting off a bit slow and depressing, Kweller quickly turns this song into a memorable tune that I have grown to love.

He will be touring parts of the country throughout the month, unfortunately not coming close to Erie. However, just listen to any of his albums from the past four years and you will be rewarded with a unique treat that most artists do not have to offer.

It's extremely difficult to say whether this is his best album so far, because it seems that he has taken a different approach to each one individually. It has the most mature sound yet, and we can only hope for more as fast as possible.

Eerie Horrorfest creeps into the weekend

By Lauren Weaver
staff writer

Kicking off Wednesday, October 4 and wrapping up on Sunday, October 6, Erie celebrates the third annual Eerie Horrorfest. Not as terrifying as the name implies, the Horrorfest is a film festival dedicated to the ghoulish art of terrifying flicks. Various length films have been submitted from up-and-coming filmmakers all over the country and have been diligently sorted through so only the most terrifying pieces will be screened.

This year's submissions total nearly 600 compared to last year's 150, proving Erie's Horrorfest to be a nationally recognized event, that grows every year. The biggest celebrity of this year's festival is George Romero, director of *Dawn of the Dead*, *Creeper*, *Night of the Living Dead*, and *Day of the Dead*. Added to the pantheon of personal accreditations, Romero acted in *Silence of the Lambs* and *Night of the Living Dead* in addition to many other films.

Other key ingredients to the cauldron of guests at this year's Horrorfest include German born P.J. Soles, an actress who starred in *Jawbreaker*, *Knightrider* and *Halloween*, which leads into another part of this weekend's celebration. On October 4, a Halloween cast reunion was held, predicted to be the largest in years.

Other actors aside from Soles that made an appearance at the fest are Brian Andrews, Sean

Clark, Nancy Loomis, Charles Cyphers, and Tony Moran. A student section of films will be shown on Sunday, featuring films like *Dr. Frankenstein*, *Apperception* and *Beast in the Creek*. The world premier of *Butcher House*, a flick co-produced by former Behrend student Michele Gonda took place Thursday night.

A typical day of festivities is not for the faint of heart. Events begin in the early afternoon and generally commence halfway into the witching hour. Admission to the various events range from \$3 to \$12. A detailed schedule can be found at <http://www.eeriehorrorfest.com>.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A scene from George Romero's *The Crazies*.

Bad grade for *School for Scoundrels*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
School for Scoundrels stars Billy Bob Thornton, Jacinda Barrett and Jon Heder.

By Josh Lane
staff writer

School for Scoundrels is about a guy named Roger (played by Jon Heder, better known as "Napoleon Dynamite") who finds an "underground school" for men who have confidence problems. The class is taught by a womanizing expert named Dr. P, played by Billy Bob Thornton, who may be the only remotely good thing about this movie. Dr. P attempts to teach this socially inept group of guys how to become "cool dudes," but the real bulk of the movie comes when Dr. P and Roger fall in love with the same woman. It becomes a challenge of who will win her over first.

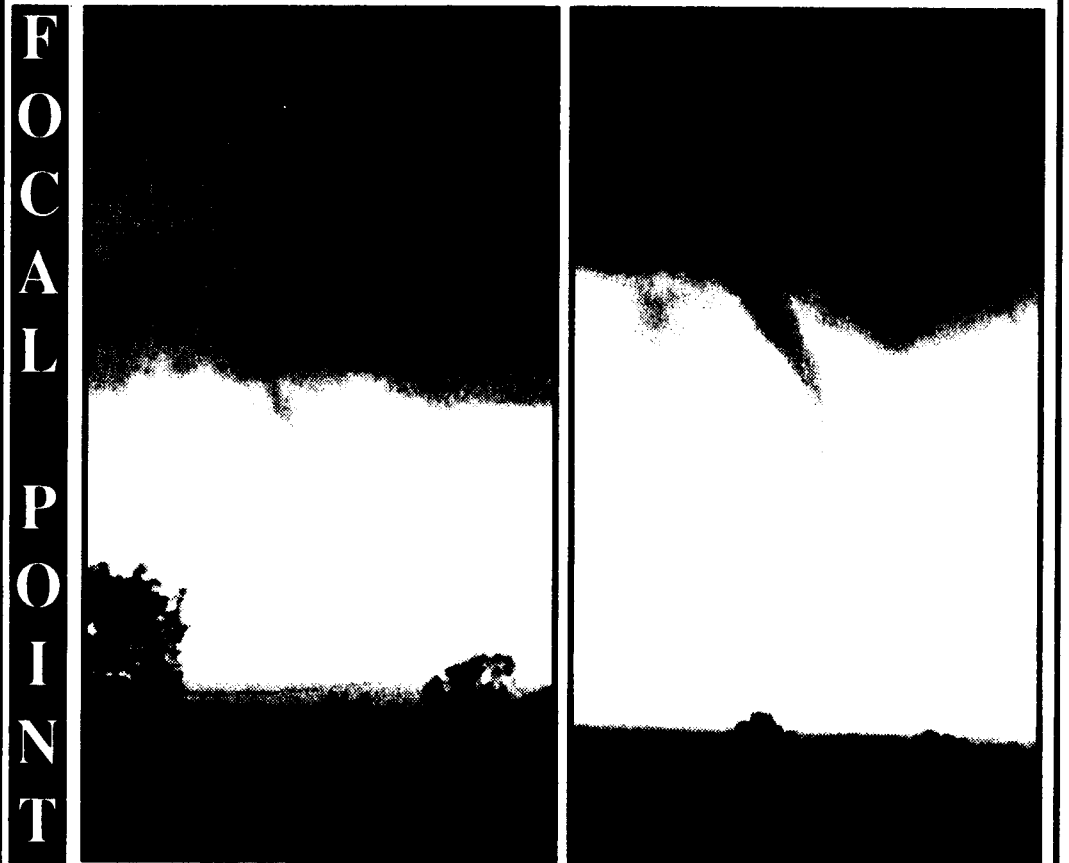
This movie has problems from the get go. The first scene involves Roger giving out a parking ticket to someone who parked in front of a fire hydrant. While Roger is printing the ticket, two large men come out of a building and start accosting him. He then proceeds to run away. The thugs decide not to chase after him, instead they take out a gun (yes, a gun) and shoot at his vehicle. This action seems a bite extreme for a parking ticket. And the really sad part was that the shooting was supposed to be funny. The whole dialogue leading up to that scene was sup-

posed to be funny, but it just wasn't. Everyone in the theater was looking around to see if they were supposed to laugh, and no one did.

The only great moments in the movie come when Dr. P is teaching the class. Thornton gives a great acting performance (unfortunately, it's not enough to counteract Heder's *Napoleon Dynamite 2.0* attempt) and is really one of the few funny things about this movie.

There are a few gags involving paintball gun shots to the groin, an experiment with mace used in a sealed area, and objects hitting people's heads at fast speeds. It's basically everything that's funny in the previews, but not really groundbreaking material. Bottom line: this movie wasn't nearly as good as it could have been. When the previews say, "From the director of *Old School*..." you come to expect a little extra effort. So if you saw the previews and chuckled, then don't waste your money; you already saw the best parts.

Pass or Fail?
FAIL



JENNIFER HAIGHT/THE BEHREND BEACON

These tornadic waterspouts were photographed from Interstate 90 last weekend. A tornadic waterspout, which occurs over a body of water (in this case, Lake Erie), is attached to a cumulonimbus cloud and shaped like a funnel. These waterspouts often pose danger to ships and planes and, if they reach land, the National Weather Service may issue tornado warnings.

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