

# STUDENT LIFE

## Peter, Bjorn and John find cure for *Writer's Block*

By Matt Schwabenbauer  
staff writer  
mjs5387@psu.edu

When you think of Sweden, nothing in particular comes to mind. Besides a weird language, it doesn't seem like they have much else besides cold weather, a bunch of castles, and Vikings. Well, Sweden now has something it can be very proud of, a band called Peter, Bjorn and John.

*Writer's Block* is the third album from indie-pop trio Peter Bjorn and John. The group hails from Stockholm, and has been pleasing crowds all over the globe with their calming mix of indie, 1960's pop, and new-wave since 1999. With haunting vocals, twangy guitars, and bouncy drums, Peter, Bjorn and John keep *Writer's Block* compelling from start to finish.

The album's opener, "Objects Of My Affection" offers up broodingly optimistic lyrics. "The question is, was I more alive then than I am now/I happily have to disagree/I laugh more often now, I cry more often now/I am more me," laments guitarist/vocalist Peter Morén.

This is the most folk-sounding track on the CD, with biting acoustics and rolls on the drums. All of these elements combined, complimented with vocals reminiscent of Morrissey, make this a lively tune fitting to set the stage for the rest of the CD.

The first single, titled, "Young Folks," is one of

those songs that immediately gets stuck in your head and doesn't seem to ever leave. The song starts out with a sloppily-whistled melody that you are guaranteed to be repeating all day.

Complementing the already poppy sound of the song is the way Morén and ex-Concretes singer

Victoria Bergsman use their voices to function together perfectly. They trade flirtatious lines back and forth that tell a charming story about people getting together for the first time.

The album takes a turn halfway through, with the bleak "Up Against the Wall." It details an interac-

tion between former lovers, which is in contrast with the optimistic tone of the rest of *Writer's Block*. "But now you start to leave before it's getting worse/I don't know what you came here for/It's almost that I wish we hadn't met at all."

The song has an early Death Cab for Cutie feel to it, with a hint of ambience. It is a good compliment to the rest of the album, and fits perfectly right in the middle.

Chances are you've heard a song or two off *Writer's Block* already, even if you don't know it. Songs from the album have been featured on everything from TV shows, to commercials, to the playlists in most clothing stores.

You've probably caught yourself humming songs from the album, without even knowing who made it. Even if you haven't heard of Peter, Bjorn and John yet, it doesn't take much time until you immediately fall in love with them. Fans of The Shins, Architecture In Helsinki or Belle and Sebastian are all right at home with Peter, Bjorn and John.

*Writer's Block* is an album that can be enjoyed by anyone, even if they aren't fans of the Scandinavia-Indie scene. This album marks the bands first release on Wichita records and is one you should get a hold of immediately if you haven't already.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Peter, Bjorn and John jam in high spirits following the release of their 3rd album.

### "Top Five Funniest Actors" By Ryan P. Gallagher

5. Vince Vaughn
4. Norm McDonald
3. Zach Braff
2. Paul Rudd
1. Will Ferrell

### "Top Five 90's Movies" By Andy McLachlan

5. Office Space
4. Mallrats
3. That Thing You Do
2. Dazed and Confused
1. Swingers

### 3:10 to Yuma is right on time



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Christian Bale and crew please audiences with a new non-stereotypical western.

By Sam Levine  
staff writer  
sjl5122@psu.edu

Westerns tend not to be the most intellectual of movies. Many think of the Western genre to be simplistic stories about a lone, central character that is able to handle every situation that is thrown his/her way, usually by force and/or uncanny gun slinging. Many Westerns suffer this formula; fortunately that is not the case in *3:10 to Yuma*. *Yuma* manages to capture a feel of older movies from the genre and at the same time incorporates themes of psychology and perceptions of what's right and what's wrong. In other words: expect to see a great deal of storytelling in addition to the action.

Director James Mangold does an excellent job capturing the feel of the old American West, depicted perfectly as an authentic time when outlaws are numerous and men of the law, not so much.

Adapted from its 1957 predecessor of the same name (which in turn was based off a short story written by Elmore Leonard) *Yuma* tells the story of two central characters. Dan Evans (Christian Bale) is a struggling rancher who leads a typical life working as hard as he can to provide for his wife and two sons. And then, there is Ben Wade, (Russell Crowe) a character who is more in touch with Western genre. Wade is a sweet-talking outlaw leader who considers anyone expendable. The two characters suddenly become connected when Evans agrees to help transport the recently captured Wade to Yuma prison. Unfortunately, the path to Yuma is blocked by various obstacles, such as Wade's own gang under the command

of the obsessive Charlie Prince (Ben Foster). Much of the story's material comes in the form of conversations between Wade and Evans; the fact that does not slow down the movie's pace really says something about the acting capabilities of Crowe and Bale.

Acting is exceptional in this film especially for the two main characters. Crowe shows no difficulty portraying the egotistical Wade and Bale is able to take on the role of Dan Evans with a precise modesty that fits into the film perfectly. The conversations between Wade and Evans (which are a large and important part of the film) are always believable and they are always spot on. It's exactly why a movie like *3:10 to Yuma* works: both characters are tough, but they aren't super-heroes. They both show faults, be it Evans problems as a family man or Wade's sadistic nature. Peter Fonda, Logan Lerman, and Foster also stand out in this finely tuned cast.

The biggest fault the movie suffers from is its overly stale storyline. Don't misinterpret, each character is memorable, has rich back-stories and interesting personalities, however the story itself is nothing special. It is a slightly above average adventure story. Luckily the banter between Wade and Evans is well worth the price.

*3:10 to Yuma* is a film well worth seeing. A stylish, exciting and thought provoking Western in this day and age, (refreshing for a genre that American cinema sees less and less of as time passes on) that is too good to pass up. Nothing in the film feels out of place. It's an excellent popcorn movie that doesn't care if it gets too philosophical for the tastes of action moviegoers, its body count will please anyone looking for non-stop excitement. Be sure to be on time for this movie.

### A Quick Look:

inside new films..

By  
Ryan P. Gallagher

### *Into the Wild*

Director and screenwriter: Sean Penn

Sean Penn's latest film is expected to wow critics and audiences of all types when it hits theaters today. This emotional film is powered by a strong storyline about a young kid leaving everything behind to explore bigger things, and is made complete with Emile Hirsch, William Hurt, Vince Vaughn, and veteran Penn all playing major roles to the film's brilliance.

This film is based off of the bestselling book by Jon Krakauer and will face the challenge that every film based off of a novel faces. No matter what type of movie it is, this comparison always pops up. If you have read the book or not, make your way to the theaters this weekend and check out Penn's latest potential masterpiece.

Release date: Sept. 21, 2007

### *We Own the Night*

Writer and director: James Gray

Joaquin Phoenix and Mark Wahlberg star as brothers in this brand new film by James Gray. Plenty of positive talk has made this film very comparable to films such as "Goodfellas" and "The Godfather," however, the public will have to wait until Oct. 12 to see the newest and most talked about mob movie in ages. An older rock underscore accompanies the rough, classic cinematography and wonderful acting crew to make this a sure contender for Best Picture this year.

What sets this apart from the typical mob movie, is the fact that each brother is on a different side of the law. While Phoenix plays a New York nightclub manager, Wahlberg takes on the role of a city cop, and the two come together in a meeting with the Russian mob. Here's an idea- go see this film.

Release date: Oct. 12, 2007