

ARTS

Dr. Bishop brings Young People's Chorus to Erie

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"A chorus reaches deep into community life, crosses all sorts of social and economic lines, and makes a contribution not only to a city's aesthetics, but also its humanity," says Robert Shaw. If that is true, than imagine how big a contribution Penn State's own Dr. Jason Bishop is making by bringing three counties together into one chorus.

"In Erie we have a city orchestra, and a city marching band, but no public outlet for talented vocalists" says Bishop. "Right now, the only place they have to perform is in churches or with their schools."

In only his second year at Penn

State, he intends to fix this problem in a big way.

The Young People's Chorus is a tri-county effort founded by Bishop to bring together people from grade school through high school and help them to make their voices heard.

"We wanted to make sure everyone, regardless of income, could participate."

According to the website of The Young People's Chorus of New York, they share the same mission statement as YPC of Erie. "To provide children of diverse abilities and backgrounds a comprehensive knowledge of music as a way to further their personal and artistic growth and foster cross-cultural understanding"

Founded in 1988 by Francisco Nunez, The YPC of New York

serves all five boroughs in the same way Bishop hopes to serve the three northwestern counties of Pennsylvania: Erie, Warren and Crawford.

This has not been an easy project so far, with the primary difficulties being transportation and simply getting the word out.

Bishop said that it will be difficult for some students to attend rehearsals when they have to drive from as far away as Warren. "Some parents would find it very hard to drive two hours to a weekly, minimum, rehearsal," he said.

The other major problem has been communicating with such a large group of potential singers. Bishop's solution has been mailing every music teacher and choir director he could find in the tri-county area.

Any major project is going to have to be funded somehow, and Bishop says that the YPC has a "solid fundraising foundation" that is likely to expand as more people become aware of the program.

Bishop, at present, is hoping

for about 100 children to join the chorus from across Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Bishop received his doctorate from Oklahoma University and his Masters from Boston University, both in the field of music.

Bishop, in addition to being founder and director of The Young People's Chorus of Erie, the Director of Choral Activities here at Behrend, as well as being interim conductor of the Erie Philharmonic Chorus.



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Harmonix takes charge with Rock Band II

By Jeff Kramer
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Everyone going in to play *Rock Band II* has already played at least a little bit of the first one and enjoyed it at most somewhat. Players of the sequel won't be disappointed to find that it's basically an expansion pack with more songs and a few new additions. For instance, you can now hammer-on and pull-off chords (two fret buttons at once).

As fun as it is, there aren't any major changes to the instruments, and the gameplay is the same. The standalone disc price tag shouldn't stand at \$60 where it does now. *Rock Band II* is certainly quality though, as one would expect. It definitely gets a recommendation from me for gamers and non-gamers alike.

Rock Band II takes a step back in the cartoony unreality direction towards *Guitar Hero 3* with the new addition of your staff that you can hire. Each character has a cute little description of what he or she does for the band and an engine-rendered picture of a character model that looks like a caricature.

The feature is completely optional: the characters do things like get you bigger shows or a little extra money—nothing game changing or too major. As I said, it's basically the same game. Hammer-ons are still harder than in *Guitar Hero*, you can still make decked-out characters, and the filler songs are still pretty fun to play. In the beginning, in particular, there's a lot of filler—songs from bands you've never heard of that are easy. Around the 35-40% mark, the songs fans will know come in.

Some songs are just so fun: you don't care who hears you down the hall singing. I was overjoyed when I selected the "random selfist," and "Psycho Killer" by Talking Heads popped up in the upper left corner. In music game tradition, there are plenty of songs that you'd be ashamed to say you like, but they're just so fun. "Girl's Not Grey" by AFI on the expert difficulty is just plain joy.

In the real world, I wouldn't exactly go down the street shout-

ing "I enjoy listening to AFI's first goth album," but in *Rock Band*, I couldn't care less.

The *Rock Band II* soundtrack is all around fantastic, even without all the *Rock Band* songs (Harmonix, *Rock Band II*'s developer, allows players to transfer all the songs from the original *Rock Band* for \$5), though the transfer function works perfectly. With songs by the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Grateful Dead, Modest Mouse, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Rush's first non-cover appearance in a music game, how could it go wrong?

There's no doubt that *Rock Band II* is a fantastic game. Asking \$60 for the disc alone is a pretty hefty fee: the price for the Special Edition (containing disc, guitar, drums and microphone) hasn't been released, but it's expected to be somewhere around \$170 (the original game's special edition price). Despite the price tag being slightly larger than the value of the game itself, *Rock Band II* is a great sequel to the first.

House Bunny bares it all

By Bonnie Heyman
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To Shelley Darlington, played by Anna Faris, living in the Playboy Mansion is a fairytale come true. However, things take a turn for the worse, when Shelley's told that Hugh Hefner doesn't want her in the mansion anymore.

Someone even tells her that "27 is, like, 59 in Bunny years," and she is devastated. With nowhere to go, a suitcase full of skimpy playboy outfits and the rusty, beaten-up station wagon she arrived in, Shelley wanders the streets. Eventually she stumbles upon a bunch of mansions that she thinks look just like her last home, the Playboy Mansion. Little does she know they're fra-

ternity and sorority houses.

In fact, Shelley doesn't know much of anything (like most of Anna Faris's characters in the majority of her movies) except how to sell sex appeal. Lucky for her, a sorority on campus needs help in that exact department. The Zeta house is full of the girls we all know and go out of our way to stay away from. The sorority is very close to being shut down forever due to their lack of new pledges.

The Zeta girls need a new housemother, some fresh new style, and a lot of attention from the opposite sex. Shelley, on the other hand, needs a place to crash and something to do with

herself now that she is no longer living her "happily ever after" dream. Together, the girls of the Zeta house and ex-Playboy Bunny are matches made in chick flick heaven.

Living in the Sorority house already are six complete different girls. Natalie played by Emma Stone, who is a book-smart girl, uncomfortable in her own skin. Mona is played by rising star Kat Dennings; she is the dark, punked-out feminist.

Harmony, portrayed by the *American Idol* runner up, Katherine McPhee, is the pregnant hippie. Demi Moore's daughter, Rumer Willis, plays Joanne, the quiet girl inconveniently strapped to a full-body brace. Carrie Mae (Dana Goodman) is the butch tomboy with a deeper voice than anyone wants to hear and Lily is played by Kiely Williams, who texts everyone her thoughts from the closet she's always hiding in.

Playboy founder, Hugh Hefner and "his girls" Holly, Bridget, and Kendra make an appearance. Colin Hanks also steps in briefly as Shelley's intellectual love interest, but spends most of his time watching her play the lovable fool instead of really taking over on screen with her. This movie is defiantly recommended for girls even though some guys may enjoy watching Anna Faris prance around in her barely-there Playboy outfits. It's a fun movie for a girls night out or just a movie you won't have to think about. Anna Faris makes the audience laugh and, of course, all of the girls learn lessons about life throughout the movie.

If *Revenge of the Nerds* and *Legally Blonde* got together and had a baby movie, *House Bunny* would be it.



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Buckcherry's Black Butterfly is mediocre at best

By Nathan Carter
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After the 2006 release of *15* by the band Buckcherry, I was wondering what their new album would bring. What it brought was the typical "more of the same." With this new release they blend with the likes of Nickelback and Hinder – in lyrical ability – and a guitar-grinding version of Aerosmith. Their lyrics are mostly chemical-induced love ballads that really contain not one single precedent in the world of modern rock. They contribute to the blurred boundary between the drug-crazed new bands and original ballads by the likes of Aerosmith and Bon Jovi.

Buckcherry never really had that much ability to begin with, but I saw something in them with their release of the album, *15* – specifically "Crazy Bitch." They were setting a pathway to an angry mainstream ballad band, which the band, Stroke 9, had earlier done for alternative rock – with *Little Black Backpack*. It's not really making the rock world progressive, but it showed a movement to a style.

However, with this release of *Black Butterfly*, I'm left wondering what the intentions are in the heads of members in Buckcherry. They've left that angry style – a necessity for them to have widespread success, in my opinion – and have

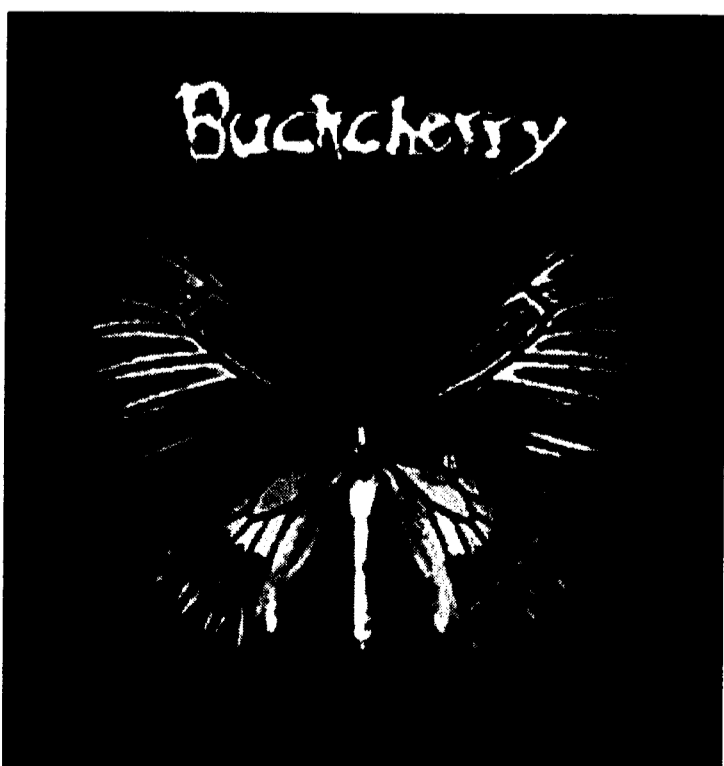
merged with the likes of Hinder, Nickelback, and Puddle of Mudd.

The breakdown is simple. If you're a Buckcherry fan, you'll probably like this album, but if you're not – yet you're still looking for an album to listen to harness Buckcherry at their best – then listen to *15*. This album probably won't do it for you.

As far as the track breakdown goes, "Rescue Me" was probably the best song on the album. A couple other songs that hold some shaky ground are:

"Dreams," "Too Drunk," and "Rose." As for all the other songs, I would recommend nothing more; otherwise, stay completely away from them. They're tacky, over-done songs – with some even being poor attempts at the styles of other bands. For example, the sixth track on the album "A Child Called It" sounds oddly like The Misfits.

All in all, Buckcherry isn't that bad of a band, I just think that this album is their worst.



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Janet Neff Sample Center
for Manners & Civility



"In a free society where standards of civility and manners are voluntary, few are signing up."

Kathleen Parker