

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## The Playlist

A look at the world of music; from the obscure to the obscure; the new and the old.

### Black Ice proves that AC/DC can remain classic

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Do you want to know how big a fan of AC/DC I am? Huge. That's the only word I can use to describe it. Some people might think that my loyalty to the band might sway any review of their newest album. In fact, the opposite is true. I hold the band to a higher standard than most casual listeners would.

Their newest album, *Black Ice*, hit Walmart shelves on Oct. 21. This was their first release since the way too bluesy *Stiff Upper Lip* in 2000.

This was their longest studio album ever and also the first time that lead singer Brian Johnson had contributed to the lyrics in almost twenty years.

Since I had my pre-ordered special edition shipped to my house, I went on YouTube.com to check it out. I'm not entirely sure if the album leaked on purpose, but its continued existence on the site would indicate band acquiescence, if not approval, of the posting.

The first track I pulled up was "Rock n' Roll Train," which the band released as a single prior to the album's release. I was blown away at their triumphant return to their pure rock format. Angus Young leads on guitar, his brother Malcolm follows with rhythm, and bassist Cliff Williams provides a steady beat with drummer Phil Rudd. This track, along with several others, is strongly reminiscent of 1990's *The Razors Edge*, which gave us such hits as "Thunderstruck," "Fire your Guns," and "Money Talks." All of which are still staples of AC/DC on tour.

In fact, the only thing I noticed that was notably different about *Black Ice* was that Brian Johnson shed his usually grave style of singing for something more resembling soul crooning for several tracks. At first I was skeptical, but thanks to slight alterations in the accompanying tracks, the new style fit perfectly.

The first 23 seconds of "Stormy May Day" sounded like any other good rock song, but just a second later, Angus, at 53, showed us a new trick for AC/DC, the slide. The technique, usually used in blues, was definitely a risk for the guitarist, but payed off. The sound is new to AC/DC, but they made it their own by putting Angus' unique style - off the wall crazy - into it.

In the US, the album sold more than 193,000 copies on the first day alone. The album was released with four possible logos on the cover. Three of them, yellow, red, and white, all feature the exact same content. The blue logo is reserved for the special hardcover edition, which features a 30 page booklet as well as live pictures of the band.

*Black Ice* was the return to their rock n' roll style AC/DC needed and fans wanted. But it also showed everyone that AC/DC still has plenty of room to expand their style and experiment with new ways to rock.

### Ratatat relatively and undeservingly hidden from mainstream

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After the walls between rock, electronic, and hip-hop are destroyed, Ratatat of New York City appears out of the debris. Ratatat was formed in 2001 by Mike Stroud (guitar) and Evan Mast (synthesizer/producer) when they were students at Skidmore College. As Mast lays down beats and synthesizer melodies, Stroud plays guitar riffs and solos over it.

Their first self-titled album, *Ratatat*, is by far their best. The name of the opening song, "Seventeen Years," comes from a dialogue from MC Young Churf who says, "I've been rapping for about 17 years, okay? I don't write my stuff anymore, I just kick it from my head, y'know what I'm sayin'. I can do that. No disrespect, but that's how I am." This song epitomizes everything I like about the band. It's catchy, and very danceable. It's so danceable it was actually played at the party scene in the film *Cloverfield*. The mood of the song goes through several changes starting very happy and upbeat, with simple and blissful guitar soloing. It quickly gets frantic, but soon after it cools down to a soothing synthesizer harmony. The ending makes it my favorite chill-out song. You really need to listen to this song to get a feel for *Ratatat*. The rest of the album follows suite with similar songs weaving rock and electronic blankets over hip-hop beats that give it texture.

Sometime last fall I went to hang out with my friend Zack and his roommate, Andy, was around. Since we were pretty much in the mood to chill, Andy decided to play some appropriate music. The song started out with a creepy echoing synthesizer riff overlapping a guitar twang, with an underlying beat. I thought to myself, "Oh this is pretty chill." A second later a wild cat's roar chimed in. After that the song evolved and I became really interested, and it turns out the name of the song is "Wildcat" off of *Classics*, their second album. *Classics* does some of the same things as *Ratatat*; however, there is a very noticeable touch of experimentation. I really enjoy this album as well because all of the songs are intriguing. I say intriguing because there is so much variance on them that I still don't know when a song is going to develop more.

In early June, I was cruising on the internet looking for music at the speed of light. Something caught my eye and I had to slam on the breaks and peel my face off the monitor. Ratatat was planning on releasing another album, appropriate titled *LP3*. I got really excited about it and grabbed a copy as soon as I could. At first, it was extremely fun to listen to. They were experimenting with their percussion and a lot more programmed sounds. Unfortunately, after a few runs through the album, I decided I didn't like it. It's a really big turn from their previous work. It's got a psychedelic feel to it, and does have some crazy melodies. Overall though, it isn't the same *Ratatat* I loved. If you're really interested though, "Brulee" is a nice and melodic song that still has an old *Ratatat* sound.

## Behrendstock closes 'flashback Friday' with a bang

By Jeff Kramer  
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Being a hippie, I couldn't resist when I heard that the Lion Entertainment Board was putting on something called Behrendstock. The two bands performing were Hot Rocks and Hard Day's Night, a Rolling Stones cover band and a Beatles cover band. Both the Rolling Stones and the Beatles place high on my list of favorite bands, so I was pretty giddy when I heard about the show.

I showed up for the concert at about 5:50 p.m., expecting the doors to open at 6 p.m. and the bands to start shortly after. Here's where things got complicated. Both the band's great setlists were great. Hard Day's Night in particular. However, the concert somewhat fell on its face until the Beatles' setlist showed up. How does that work?

Hot Rocks, in the character of the Rolling Stones, decided that they were going to be just like the Stones and not start the show till 7:20 p.m. By that time, all but 30 people had left. Granted, they did play a good set, and they sounded pretty similar to the classic Stones, but the crowd was flat. Everybody was fed up with the group. The band members thought they could get away with it, but they forgot that it's a Friday night at Penn State: people wanted to party, not sit in McGarvey, for an hour and twenty minutes.

Some friends and I even tried to start a mosh pit to get people excited, but that didn't work. I suppose it's because the Rolling Stones aren't as popular as the Beatles, people just weren't that excited. Even when the Keith

Richards guy walked into the audience.

Then Hard Day's Night came on, to the delight of everybody in the room. They sounded just like the Beatles, looked like the Beatles, and even cracked jokes like the Beatles. The crowd was a dancing, swaying mass of the complimentary tie-dye shirts the LEB gave to the first 60 people in line. When they played "Twist and Shout," I looked around the room. There wasn't a single person who wasn't at least shaking his or her foot in time with the rhythm, if not more. Most were dancing and singing.

That speaks for both the quality of the band and the tragically small size of the crowd. In fact, when they played "Let it Be," all but eight people put their arms on each other's shoulders and

swayed in front of the stage.

Both groups played great sets, there's no question about that. Hot Rocks just thought so highly of themselves that they thought they could get away with starting the show an hour and twenty minutes late. They didn't want to play towards the beginning when there were about 80 people in the room because they didn't think there were enough people. They wrongly decided to ruin the show, the Beatles cover band, and the LEB by acting so pretentious. I guess they had a point, they opened for the actual Stones a few times, however, that's no excuse. The show wasn't ruined, though; it was a success for everyone who was patient enough to wait to hear some good covers.

## Twilight book deserves more credit

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Vampires have taken pop culture by storm. Various vampire novels fill the Barnes & Noble must-read tables. Some readers may have even noticed this odd trend and pondered its origins.

Think back to a few years ago. Vampires were not unpopular, but neither were they as conta-

gious as they are now. However, in late 2005 the infection began.

On Oct. 5, 2005 Stephenie Meyer's best selling novel *Twilight* hit the streets. Women of all ages began to flock to bookstores across the nation and for the first time in years a new male heartthrob entered the

scene. What's the most interesting part? He's not even real. Edward Cullen took the concept of the Knight in Shining Armor and ran a marathon with it. He's every girl's dream: he's handsome, sophisticated, and smooth (literally). He's got superpowers and he can't die. Again, what more could a girl want? Now, some of you may not know of this trend, and with the movie fast approaching, it's time you were brought up to speed.

The story's protagonist is Isabella "Bella" Swan. She is the quintessential "everygirl." She's not drop dead gorgeous, but she is cute. She's not a genius, but she is smart. She's a bit clumsy and awkward, and is just trying to fit in at her new high school in Forks, Washington. She seems to be settling in just fine when a series of strange events leads her into contact with the mysterious Edward Cullen. Slowly but surely she begins to discover that there is more to Edward than meets the eye. Here's the clincher: she's falling madly in love with him.

*Twilight* is a great book, pure and simple. Meyer does a great job describing the unearthly events that Bella experiences. The imagery puts you right in the heart of the action and romance. It is so well written in fact, that even though nothing really happens for pages on end, you can't put it down.

Where the book really knocks it out of the park is with the characters. Bella is just perfect. She is the average person put in an extreme situation; and she reacts

the way she should. She cries when we would cry. She screams when we would scream. There's no magic that flows through her veins or destiny to fulfill. She's just clumsy and cute Bella.

There's also the terrific supporting cast. Edward is perfect in almost every way. However, he can be overly protective and jealous. Jasper is mysterious and brooding. His lover Alice is flighty and childlike, but also innocent and forgiving.

Emmet is cocky and arrogant, yet loveable, while his counterpart, Rosalie, is beautiful but cold. Then there is the young and immature, yet down-to-earth Jacob Black. They all have their pros and cons. The cast may all seem perfect, but each have their personal share of lies to hide.

The story is mostly a romance novel, with twists of action and excitement that build up to a spectacular end. Though it becomes mildly irritating when Bella blacks out for half of the fight scenes. Also, her ability to under-react to situations that most of us would wet ourselves in becomes veritably tiresome.

Regardless, the story is still top-notch. So please, read this masterpiece before the movie hits theaters on Nov. 21. And a word of advice to all the men who read the paper: make it a point to read this book! It is a way to talk to almost any women. And if you like to be places where a ton of women are, go to the movie theater at opening night of the *Twilight* movie. You will not be disappointed.



Twilight hit stores Oct. 8, 2005. The movie is set for debut Nov. 21, 2008.

Artistic,  
creative or  
ambitious?

Write for the  
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"Glory belongs to the act of being constant to something greater than yourself, to a cause, to your principles, to the people on whom you rely and who rely on you."

John McCain