

ALBUM REVIEW

COHEED AND CAMBRIA DISCOVERS GOLD AT END OF *BLACK RAINBOW*

NATHAN CARTER
staff writer

Coheed and Cambria is a band that's grown on me steadily since hearing their third album, *From Fear Through the Eyes of Madness*, which featured arguably their most famous song, "Welcome Home."

Easily more famous through the beginnings of the video game franchise Rock Band (which used "Welcome Home" in their advertising campaign), Coheed and Cambria has been around for some time now, releasing five amazing albums in less than ten years. Most recently, the band released album called *Year of the Black Rainbow* on April 13.

While it doesn't really evolve much from their last album (other than a mildly heavier sound that's been a trend for the band between albums), *Year of the Black Rainbow* is still a great disc.

The band - led by singer Claudio Sanchez and guitarist Travis Stever - works with spe-

cific material for their lyrics, which all flow in a narrative storyline that's predestined by Sanchez' own work. He created a science fiction graphic novel called *The Armory Wars*, and all of the albums produced by Coheed and Cambria are according to its storyline. *Year of the Black Rainbow* is no exception and stands as a prequel to the series.

Sanchez says that the Columbia Records team working with him "has helped us evolve our sound to be more powerful and dynamic than ever, and we think it's definitely our best work to date."

While this newest album received mediocre reviews, and some fans would argue that this isn't their best work, I lean towards Sanchez's statement that it actually is their best work to date. However, I only make that statement to say that their editing and lyrics have gained power in this new release since their last.

Myself, I'm a bigger fan of their *Second Stage Turbine Blade* album, but that's a matter of personal preference and



the songs that I most easily associate with.

Regardless, *Year of the Black Rainbow* has a lot to offer long-time fans and newcomers alike. The first interesting thing about the album is that it's being released as an optional deluxe edition.

With the deluxe copy of the new album, Sanchez collaborated with best-selling author Peter David to create a 352-page novel of the same name.

Along with this promising piece of fan merchandise that I haven't yet got hold of, the album offers several amazing tracks. "Here We Are Juggernaut," the single from *Year of the Black Rainbow*, was released on March 9. Accompanied with the technical pop-metal sound that the band has become so famous for, I can't help but notice the prominence of drums in the song. While the band's drums have always been great, I think their new drummer, Chris Pennie, brings a more rounded rhythm than before.

"This Shattered Symphony," shows their harder metal

roots, contains an undeniable speed-progressive quality.

"World of Lines," a fast-paced pattern track reminiscent of "The Running Free," also stands out on the album, which largely feels like an album full of singles.

Some critics have clung to that observation, stating *Year of the Black Rainbow* seems "flat and void of passion," but I disagree. If a band can put out an album full of tracks that all listen like singles, it shows a sense of roundedness and comfort.

Besides, the acoustic beginnings in Pearl of the Stars disprove their assumption, as it's the first semi-harmonious track by Sanchez and Stever with a great electric solo toward the middle. Easily a science-fiction themed ballad, the song is my favorite of the album, as it exposes Sanchez wide vocal range and Stever's editing prowess.

If you're a fan of Coheed and Cambria, check out *Year of the Black Rainbow*.

Album art from deviantART jumbo1616

PREVIEW: CAMPUS CULTURE

Creative Writer's Speakers Series: Brenda Miller

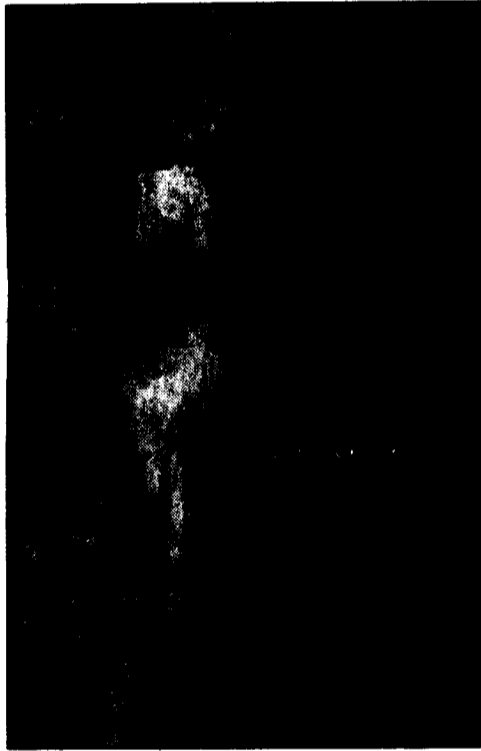


SHANNON EHRLIN
staff writer

On Thursday, April 22, author Brenda Miller will read from some of her pieces at the Smith Chapel.

Her work includes *Writing of the Animals*, *Season of the Body* and *Tell It Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction*.

Her most recent book, *Blessing of the Animals*, is a collection of essays that the Eastern Washington University Press said draws the reader "into a conversation on topics ranging from new dogs to old stained glass, from a walk in Port-



<http://myweb.facstaff.wvu.edu/millerb/>

land's Japanese Garden to a sojourn in Jerusalem, from model airplanes to Magic 8 Balls... Miller leads us on a pilgrimage through her life as a woman driven by spiritual yearning."

An associate professor of English at Western Washington University and editor-in-chief of the Bellingham Review, Miller has been featured in The Georgia Review, The Missouri Review, The Sun and Creative Nonfiction, just to name a few. Miller has also received numerous Pushcart Prizes for her essays in creative nonfiction.

A reception will be held beforehand at 5:30 p.m. in the downstairs area of the Chapel, and the reading will begin at 6 p.m.

ALBUM REVIEW

A band's April Uprising

NATHAN CARTER
staff writer

The John Butler Trio, a band that defies genres (as they are equally reggae as they are alternative and as equally pop as they are rock), has been around since their emergence in the late '90s. With Bryon Luiters and Nicky Bomba, John Butler completes a very talented three-person band that's steadily gaining popularity, mostly through Internet fame.

The band creates a sort of breezy, alternative rock sound much in the style of State Radio and Barenaked Ladies, except the speed of Butler's delivery showcases more of an original sound than his contemporaries.

One of my friends introduced me to them last year, via the *Sunrise Over Sea* album. I immediately loved the beat and pace of their material.

From quick guitar patterns in "Bound to Ramble" and "Company Sin" to slower, more ballad-like songs such as "Seeing Angels" and "What You Want," *Sunrise Over Sea* was one of my frequented summer albums between my freshman and sophomore years here.

When I found out through Facebook that the band was releasing a new album, I was immediately excited.

This is yet another album that will easily be a part of my summer, because it's just one of those albums that you put in the car and cruise to.

The new album is called *April Uprising*, conveniently released on the April 6, and with it comes an expansion of sound for the band.

Since their older albums, they've gotten better at guitar (even though it would be hard for them to do better) and they've gotten "poppier."

That's the only problem I had with the album. It speaks greatly to a younger audience, though I think their genre and older material speaks much more to adults. The two songs that show this, and the only two songs on the whole album that I even mildly disliked, were "C'mon Now" and "Johnny's Gone." The rest of the album, on the contrary, is a huge success.

"Revolution," the first song is what I would call one of the singles. Taking a political standpoint, as so many alt-reggae musicians do, the song preaches a revolution to take

back what America's citizens lost in the war: lives.

"One Way Road," the second of my prescribed singles, is vocally fast and sounds like it would be amazing live. Amidst a semi-pop sound is this over-coming tale of someone who doesn't want to be nobody and subsequently how conformity is a "one way road."

The last single, "Close to You," showcases a moderately technical sound with guitar reminiscent of '70s style. Obviously a love song, as are many of John Butler Trio's songs, "Close to You" has a really interesting African drum and guitar solo toward the middle, showing off the band's apparent practice and diversity.

Three other songs that stood out are "Steal It" (for its chilled out bass-driven ballad quality), "I'd Do Anything" (another political song about our soldiers; particularly the ones in love), and "Fool For You" (also for its chilled out, trance-like beginning that develops into a fast-paced ballad, and in my opinion, encompasses the style of the entire album).

So, if you're looking for a new sound, check out John Butler Trio's new album, *April Uprising*.

ERIE CULTURE

Why doesn't Erie get good movies?

DAN KINEM
senior reporter

That may be an overstatement, but it's mostly true. Looking at the films playing in Erie makes me want to pick up and run to the nearest big city.

I hate to say it, but while I love Erie for its location, its charming amusement park, and its hardcore scene, it's a disgrace for all film fans.

As of writing this the current mind-numbing trash playing at the only two theaters in Erie are disheartening. Not only do we have yet another nonsensical film from Tyler Perry, but we have forgettable films like *Date Movie*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and 2-D versions of latest Hollywood trash *Clash of the Titans* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

While Erie occasionally has interesting film-related events like The Eerie Horror Fest and the new Spirit Quest Film Fest they are few and far between.

I know there is an interest. Just a few years ago I went to a marvelous night of silent films with a live music

accompaniment at The Warner Theatre, and it was fairly packed on a weeknight. It's just not being offered consistently, and when it is, there is no promotion.

If you build it, they will come. We have no possibility to offer underground films doing world tours that are reliable. We don't even get the majority of films that are nominated for Academy Awards. It slips right under the Erie radar, and most people miss out on great artistic events.

There is no Woody Allen, no Von Trier (*Antichrist* was one of the most talked about films of last year and Erie has to wait for a DVD release), no indie comedies, no documentaries, etc. A lot of people don't even know we aren't getting movies. They just think that what plays at Tinsletown is all there is. Well, I'm here to inform you that couldn't be farther from the truth.

What you are seeing are films expected to make the most money and that are the most accessible films. Any films that try to do something different would

never play here. That's why Erie must invest in an art house theater.

The positives that could come from a local art house theater are endless. Not only would it give the local cinephiles a place to go for their latest Von Trier or Herzog film, it would awaken a currently sleeping art scene in Erie. It would offer an artistic and valuable replacement to the newest 3-D blockbuster.

Those films have their place in Erie, don't get me wrong. I am not suggesting getting rid of Tinsletown. I am only suggesting offering a substitute that requires thought. It could be used as an educational tool for teachers to take students. It could open people of all ages' eyes to art that they may have never been aware existed.

If anyone out there is reading, please do something to make this happen. There is an audience here for these films, and having them would be a huge improvement to the community.



<http://www.ning.com/>