

ENTERTAINMENT



CD Review

By DEVINIQUE MURRAY
Staff Reporter
DVM112@PSU.EDU

Undisputed queen of hip-hop and R&B soul singer Mary J. Blige tops the charts with her new album, *The Breakthrough*. This album is great, quite simply, it's a must have.

The hip-hop and R&B soul singer has released eight albums over thirteen years and, every time she releases an album it is better than the last. While lots of fans and listeners know her for her low tempo melodies and her sad dramatic lyrics, the album *The Breakthrough* is totally different.

When Blige announced that she was over her drug addiction and alcohol problems and that she was through with her abusive relationships, lots of R&B listeners lost faith in her ability. Blige had been singing about these problems since she arrived on the R&B scene back in 1992. Many listeners thought that the singer would not be the same unless she was singing about these former problems.

Did she prove some, listeners wrong? Yes, indeed. The *Breakthrough* album concentrates on the positive aspects in the life of Mary J Blige. She sings about her new life that includes her newly wed husband and drug free life. Not only does Blige show off her vocals on this album, but also shows that her struggles are over.

Blige delivers an important message through her strongly written lyrics. In track seven on the album, *Take Me As I Am*, Blige lets fans know that she is through with being the person that everybody else wants her to be. Mary J Blige also has numerous other songs on her album including her number one single, *Be Without You*, *Enough Cryin'*, and *MJB Da MVP* featuring rapper 50Cent. The album also features rapper Jay-Z - the newly found president of Def Jam records - singer Brook Valentine, Raphael Saadiq, Dave Young and U2.

The queen also works with some of the hottest producers in the business including Bryan Michael, Rodney Jerkins, Jimmy Jam, and Terry Lewis. Your R&B cd collection will definitely be missing without Mary J. Blige's must-buy album, *The Breakthrough*.

Billboard.com's New CD Releases

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Yellowcard
Lights and Sound
This follow-up has "Album That Proves We Have Grown" written all over it, but here is the thing: they have.



The Greatest
Cat Power
Recorded in Memphis with a who's who of Memphis session veterans such as Al Green guitarist Mabon "Teenie" Hodges, the album is highlighted by jaunty, soul-infused tracks.

Shake things up at Shakey's

By MICHAEL ALBRIGHT
Staff Reporter
MBA133@PSU.EDU

Shakey's? What's Shakey's? Shakey's is probably the best local hotspot you've never heard of. It's also a horrible name for a barbershop, but more importantly it's a stop worthy of adding to your weekend routine.

Located at 312 Mill St. in Hershey, about fifteen minutes from the PSH campus, stands Shakey's Sports Bar. It's described as "No soap operas, only sports," by manager Nancy Kegerreis and billed as a "Meetin', Eatin', Greetin' kind of place." Celebrating its twelfth year of operation this July, Shakey's has quite a history under its belt.

The foundation for the club was laid in 1950 by John Martini who, appropriately, dubbed the budding venue Martini's. However, the club would undergo several name changes over the next 44 years.

Names such as Martini's, King Johns Tavern, and The Mill Street Inn would grace the locale until July 1, 1994 when retired Hershey Bears goalie Marc "Shakey" D'amour breathed new life into the scene. Since then Shakey's has grown to be the unofficial home of the Hershey Bears hockey team, and the rest is, as they say, history.

At first sight it would seem that the old adage "Don't judge a book by its cover" was penned specifically with Shakey's in mind. From the exterior, Shakey's appears to be an ordinary, commonplace bar with the traditional markings of an ordinary watering hole. Plain signs, dark windows and

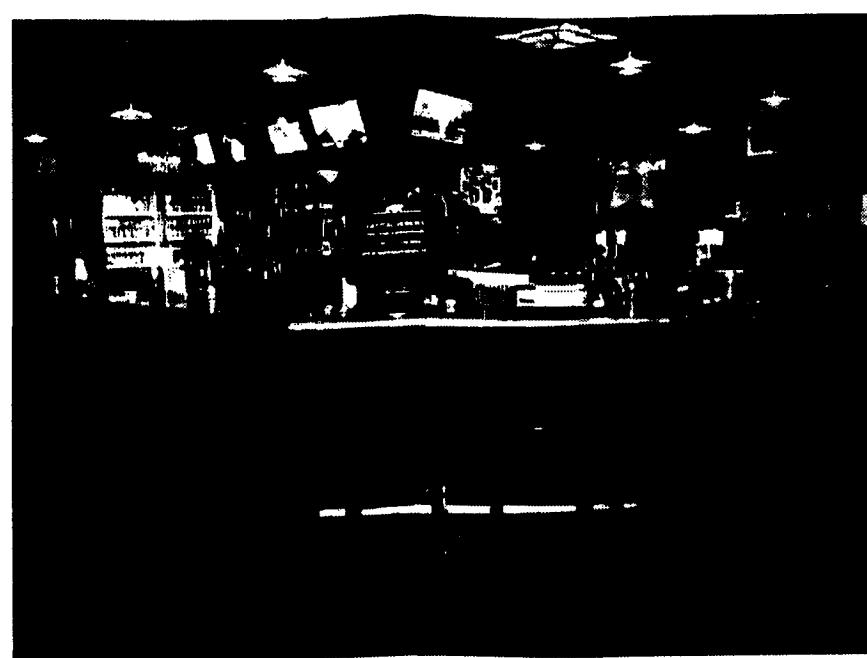


Photo by MICHAEL ALBRIGHT/The Capital Times
Shakey's hosts many events including televised sporting events, live local bands and comedians, pool tournaments, and DJs.

glowing red neon signs peer from the inside out.

However, as you walk inside you are greeted with the 30 person wraparound bar, with wraparound flat screen televisions to match. Round, four person tables adorn the rest of the area immediately surrounding the bar within earshot of the Internet Jukebox that is becoming a staple of modern nightspots, putting millions of songs at your fingertips.

To your left you are offered a wide array of videogames in the game room, the main focus, of course, being the famed bar attraction *Golden Tee* with a live internet connection, allowing you to rub your score in the face of not only your friends but anyone in the world with a few

quarters and a golf addiction.

To your right the dance floor, with its checkered black and white floor and colorful lighting, seduces you to find a dance partner as quickly as you can.

Overlooking the mingling masses is the stage with speakers so enormous they must have been bought secondhand at an Aerosmith garage sale. However, if one is able to make it across the dance floor with their shyness still in tact, they will find themselves ascending onto the balcony.

The balcony is home to several more tables and, just incase there wasn't enough in-house entertainment to keep you busy already, two pool tables.

quarters and a golf addiction.

Of course, keeping in sports bar tradition, Shakey's displays numerous sports jerseys and sports themed décor on the walls, as well as several massive flat screens filling just about every corner available, making it impossible to miss the game wherever you choose to sit, stand, or fall.

Shakey's offers a wide variety of food and drinks. With 12 of the most popular brews on tap, both domestic and imported, and a mountain of wines and liquors stacked behind the bar, the staff can only dare customers to name a drink they can't make.

Shakey's food menu also has all the favorites covered, such as subs, pizza, and wings. Six and twelve pack carryouts are also available.

During the week, Shakey's hosts many special events such as televised sporting events, live local bands, and comedians.

During the NFL season, you can catch your favorite professional games on the DirecTV NFL Sunday Ticket network, and of course Monday Night Football, both drawing crowds that teeter on the edge of the 500-person building capacity.

While Shakey's boasts a notable selection of sports games they are also home to local bands every Friday night and occasionally Saturdays as well.

Tuesdays see the local pool tournament and Wednesdays give the dance floor a workout, as a live hip-hop DJ is in house.

Weekly food and drink specials are also offered. Monday's patrons can enjoy .25-cent wings from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. and one would be foolish to pass up the "3/\$1.00" tacos on Tuesdays along with .25-cent wings, again from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m.

Shakey's Sports Bar is open daily from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 a.m., leaving you no excuse to not check it out. Whether it's football, hockey, live rock bands or live hip-hop music that fuels your craving to get out and about, Shakey's offers entertainment for all.

So, next time you take a much needed study break or are just plain bored and conclude that surely you must have visited all the quality hotspots in the area already, head over to Shakey's Sports Bar for a guaranteed night of fun.

Shakey's Sports Bar
312 Mill Street
Hershey, PA 17033
Phone: 717-533-9824
CC: All major
Smoking
Website:
<http://www.shakeysportsbar.com>

The Capital Times is looking for suggestions for the Hot Spot section.

If you are interested or have ideas, e-mail us at captimes@psu.edu or drop some snail mail in the suggestion box in front of the Capital Times office.

Geek Corner

By LISA STONE
Staff Reporter
LSCSTONE@GMAIL.COM

Rejoice geeks, nerds, and weirdoes of the campus! We have successfully infiltrated the campus newspaper, and shall henceforth have our views made public. No longer shall we be the voiceless, sun-deprived denizens of the corners.

Now we are the rather quiet, sun-avoiding, corner-lurking folk with an article in the newspaper. Say hello to the new Geek Corner, where I shall endeavor to bring you news on topics that relate to that geeky little world inside your head.

For this first issue I decided to go big. We are going to be reviewing some of the popular Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) on the market.

First up, as I am sure many of you expected, is World of Warcraft, or as it is known by addicts: World of Warcraft. WoW is one of the biggest online games out there today.

It was my first MMORPG, so I am probably a bit prejudiced, but even so, most folks who have played agree the interface and graphics on WoW are shoddy Internet connections.

WoW is a large program and with the numerous patches, it is only growing more memory intensive.

WoW is home to one of the most massive environments I have ever encountered, meaning that you are rarely without somewhere to explore. Along with these areas there are also numerous quests designed to keep players amused and frustrated. Unfortunately, after reaching the maximum level, one of the

only things left to do is "instance raids" for gear. Mind you, this isn't entirely the case.

There is an impressive player vs. player system set up and several "resource grinding" quests in place, but common opinion is that even those get redundant after a while.

As for crafting, WoW has an adequate system, but many MMORPGs out there have much more detailed and involving systems.

Questing is a major part of any game and WoW is not an exception to this rule. I have to admit though the questing in WoW leaves something to be desired.

Personally, I never feel like I have really accomplished anything when I turn in a quest. Some of the quests are long strings with some sweet rewards at the end but, as for plot, it just isn't there. The quests just aren't as engrossing as some of the other games I have tried.

I will warn you, on the topic of system resources, success at WoW is not to be had with third-rate computer systems or shoddy Internet connections.

WoW is a large program and with the numerous patches, it is only growing more memory intensive.

As for lag, I will refer you to a common saying among my playing friends: "The three things most likely to kill you in a large raid are the tanks losing agro (which translates from WoW speak roughly to "control of the monster"), the priests running out of mana, or either one of them lagging out." A good graphics card and a nice set of RAM are also necessary to run WoW.

As for style of game play, WoW is definitely not designed for the lone wolf soloists. At higher levels, players are expected to form large groups and go into special areas called "instances".

This is one of the only ways to get a hold of high-end gear for the most

part, so if you don't play well with others, my recommendation would be to consider another game. As far as understandability goes, the system Blizzard uses is very workable once you have played for a while.

So, overall, I would say that World of Warcraft is definitely worth a try for just about anybody. It is far from perfect, but Blizzard definitely puts some effort into their game, and the new Burning Crusade expansion promises to make things interesting in the WoW universe.

Next up for review is the City of Heroes (CoH) and City of Villains (CoV). These are two games that are designed around the same storyline. In CoH you design and play one of the good guys, going about doing good deeds, saving damsels, and the usual.

In CoV you, basically, do the opposite: evil deeds, kidnapping said damsels, and stealing candy from babies. These games allow players to express themselves in all new ways.

Whether you want to unleash your spandex-wearing, brightly colored inner hero, or give in to that leather-clad, angsty evil-doer in your soul, you can do it in these games and do it in style.

Both of these games are home to the best character creation system I have ever seen, period. The character creation engine allows you to select everything from body type, to face, hair, costume, and coloring. Then there are "mutant features", auras, capes, and other bells and whistles you may want to add to your little alter ego. It took me an hour to get my character just the way I wanted it.

Picture courtesy of WorldofWarcraft.com
WoW is a large program and it only gets more memory intensive.



The questing in EverQuest2 is on the generic end but, in crafting, this game excels.

Depending on the type of character you build, you can either be the ultimate team player or go forth and save/destroy your own city.

You can also adjust your difficulty level, allowing for more options in this area. The control system isn't quite what WoW has, but it is not a handicap by any means.

The environments for these two games aren't anywhere near as large as what WoW has. While there are always people on the street ready to

games are excellent ones to kill some time and have some fun with.

Finally, the last review of popular and well-known MMORPGs is EverQuest (EQ) and EverQuest II (EQ2).

These members of the EverCrack family

have been around for quite a while,

and have numerous die-hard fans as

well as foaming-at-the-mouth haters.

They both host massive environments, sometimes large enough that days could pass without encountering others.

Game play is interesting. It took a bit of adjusting for me to successfully begin understanding and using the interfaces to their full advantage.

Questing seemed somewhat generic to me but, in crafting, both of these games excelled, with EQ2 taking the proverbial cake.

I have never before encountered such an engrossing system. It makes everything from wearable items

to furniture and trying to get the materials needed was maddening in the soul consuming, I-didn't-sleep-for-36-hours kind of way.

System resources were moderate, taking reasonable amounts of memory, graphics card power, and RAM. I would not dare try either game on anything less than a cable modem, however.

Lag equates to a level 5 rabbit (in the newbie zone) killing you off. That's a slight exaggeration but I get the idea. Overall, these are games that I am not sure I could get into quite as much as some of the other MMORPGs available, but I can definitely understand why some people enjoy playing them.

The games above are just a few examples of the MMORPGs out there today. Others such as Guild Wars, Star Wars Galaxy, The Chronicles of Spellborn, Horizons, Dark Age of Camelot, and Hero's Journey are other online games that also enjoy devoted followings.

So I leave you with a taste of what is possible and a reminder that you have to pay tuition as well as the monthly fees for most games.



Picture courtesy of WorldofWarcraft.com

WoW is a large program and it only gets more memory intensive.