

ENTERTAINMENT

"House" is the perfect medicine

By **ALLISON MILLS**
Staff Reporter
MXA@PSU.EDU

FOX's hit television show "House" is a medical drama like no other. Though the stories that go on in the Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital lack the complicated romantic problems that characterize most medical dramas, "House" is still one entertaining, captivating, and impressive show.

House focuses on one primary character, Dr. Gregory House (Hugh Laurie), who is a witty, intelligent, arrogant, self-centered, narcissistic, and yet strangely likeable diagnostic doctor. Secondary characters include Dr. James Wilson (Robert Sean Leonard), House's opposite and best friend, and Dr. Lisa Cuddy (Lisa Edelstein), the sexy hospital administrator and House's boss; both characters have no apparent role separate from House's character development, and, of course, being the butt of his many inappropriate and sarcastic jokes.

In the first three seasons, House solves seemingly impossible



Hugh Laurie playing the title character of FOX network's "House", a medical comedy-drama now running in its fourth season.

medical cases with his team of fellows. These brave, but doctors are Allison Cameron (Jennifer Morrison), Robert Chase (Jesse Spencer), and Eric Foreman (Omar Epps). The basic pattern to every episode goes as follows: A rare medical condition is presented; House's team suggests different diagnoses which House rudely disproves; the patient (or in some cases, patients) condition worsens

and becomes startlingly close to death. It is at this point that House has a revelation and realizes exactly what is ailing the patient (not always in time, however).

Probably the most notable and notorious characteristic about House is that he is a Vicodin addict, which really comes into focus in season three. While treating a detective in the hospital's free clinic with his typically poor bedside manner,

House makes the mistake of popping a pill in front of him. Degraded and embarrassed, the detective uncovers House's dirty little secret and exposes it. House refuses to cooperate, and his actions (which many would describe as denial-related) put a large strain on all of his relationships.

At the close of the third season, House, who doesn't like change, receives quite the shock from his team when he finds himself working alone. At the beginning of the fourth and current season, House (still happily taking his Vicodin), searches for a new team as the show humorously spoofs reality television

shows. Beginning with forty doctors, he eliminates more each week, in a style reminiscent of "The Bachelor" and "Survivor".

For medical insights on "House", be sure to check out PoliteDissent.com. A real medical doctor posts a blog for each episode, commenting on the medical realities. For the most part, he contends that the diagnoses are correct, but are normally hastily arrived at or treated without first confirming the diagnosis. His biggest nitpick with the show appears to be the team performing surgeries and tests they are not qualified to do. After reading a few of his blogs, it was clear to me that he is a critic who enjoys the show.

"House" has captivated audiences everywhere with its humor and candor embodied in its title character, Dr. House. It is refreshing to tune into a medical drama that is not based on complicated love triangles. While the next episode is predictable (as far as the plot goes), the medical mind-bogglers are always intriguing. All in all, House is as uncontainable a character as he is entertaining.



A glance at the album artwork – bashful poses of a skinny girl in awkward sneakers, reluctant to engage the camera, her mouth securely hidden behind a transistor radio – would give one the wrong impression. "Little Voice", the album from newcomer Sara Bareilles, showcases a young woman with a voice that is at once soothing yet surprisingly strong. Curiously, it seems that Bareilles is not playing coy, but is instead endearingly unaware of her blossoming strength, as the tracks that comprise "Little Voice" reveal a girl at a lonely crossroads struggling with the burdensome vestiges of once-fulfilling relationships.

The album kicks off with "Love Song", a radio-friendly hit which has been quietly gaining mainstream play. Deceptive in its gaiety, the song is a desire to reexamine a relationship which is lacking direction: "Convinced me to please you/ made me think that I need this too/ I'm trying to let you hear me as I am/ I'm not gonna write you a love song/ cause you asked for it/ cause you need one, you see."

Equally energetic is the song "Fairy Tale", where Bareilles channels the throaty-punch of feisty Fiona Apple. A clever feminist deconstruction, the song pokes fun at the relationships depicted in princess stories: "Sleeping Beauty's in a foul mood/ for shame she says./ None for you dear prince, I'm tired today./ I'd rather sleep my whole life away than have/ you keep me from dreaming." "Fairy Tale" provides a new perspective on ideas like chivalry and female independence, and calls for a new era of relationships based on equality and trust. Remember: there's normally an abusive slob hiding behind that shining armor. "But the story needs some mending and a better/ happy ending/ 'Cause I don't want the next best thing".

Complementing the band of upbeat tracks are the more reflective, slow songs, which are delicately sprinkled throughout the album. Highlighting the mix is "Gravity", a melancholy ballad in which the speaker regrets the oppressive influence of an old relationship: "Set me free, leave me be./ I don't want to fall another moment into your gravity./ Here I am and I stand so tall, just the way/ I'm supposed to be./ But you're on to me and all over me." Accompanied by a gentle piano and strings, her voice takes on a tone of soulful grace comparable to Sarah McLachlan. Towards the finale, the strings intensify to an emotional peak, leading the song to its shattering conclusion: "But you're neither friend nor foe though I can't/ seem to let you go./ The one thing that I still know is that/ you're keeping me down."

Sarah and Fiona aside, Bareilles' album creates its own distinction in the songs that show off her own unique style, like in the provocative "Come Round Soon"; sultry and soulful, Bareilles purrs "I could use another cigarette/ But don't worry daddy, I'm not addicted yet/ One too many drinks tonight and I miss you/ Like you were mine" over a smoky-steady hypnotic beat, her voice cascading like a waterfall in the chorus. Perhaps the most male-dependent song on the album, Bareilles reminds us at the end of the track that though she may be upset now, she won't be heartbroken for long: "I may seem naive if I cry as you leave/ Like I'm just one more tortured heart/ These cracks that I show as I'm watching/ you go aren't tearing me apart".

Sara Bareilles, a talented pianist who penned every one of the songs on this album, is a great alternative to the same-old-same-old offerings of Pop divas like Britney, Janet and Mariah. Ignore her deceptively shy demeanor; "Little Voice" is a big surprise.

Geek Corner: Spore arrives; Kreuger doesn't

By **MATTHEW MAHONEY**
Columnist
MLM5039@PSU.EDU

Recurring Nightmare

By now many of you may have heard the news: New Line Cinemas has looked into the possibility of remaking the classic 1984 horror film "A Nightmare on Elm Street". While "Nightmare on Elm Street" may not exactly be a film with a cult following, it is one that any child of the 1980s can look to and have memories of, most of them revolving around the idea of "Was I really scared of that?" or "My God, that is a young Johnny Depp."

Most people (and by "people" I mean fans) have looked at this with disgust. What's the need to digitize a whole bunch of blood when the classic film remains unrivaled to this day? Unfortunately, those that stand to make a pretty penny off of "re-envisioning" "Nightmare" have decided this is a great idea.

There are a limited number of things people can do in protest (actually, just two): Blog about how much it's going to suck, just like every other fat man in their parent's basement is doing. Or, you can decide not to see it. Unfortunately, horror fans and movie-goers stuck

in the world of being cool with what's nostalgic and retro will spend their hard-earned dollars to see this crap, and in doing so will be sending the wrong message to the studios: that we, the consumers, actually like this schlock.

To those of you that would go see this: Do us a favor, and stay at home. For a long time. Your genes should never be replicated and I don't want to hear your opinions on

how a G.I. Joe movie would be the greatest thing ever. (Yes, there is a G.I. Joe movie in the works with a cast already announced.) Just don't do it.

TV might be worth watching again

The writers' strike is all but over. At the penning of this article the deal was on the table and just about finalized. An official announcement is expected soon. What this means

for all of us is that TV will once again become a staple of the American household. No longer will we be tortured with reruns that force us outdoors into finding forms of entertainment that have meaningful impact on our lives and those around us. Conan, Colbert, Stewart, all of them; they can now return to being funny.

Shows like "24", "Lost", and "Heroes" can finally get the treatment they deserve and actually begin to air. "Battlestar Galactica" isn't due back until April, a date that is a month further than its previous delay, and "Heroes" won't have any new content until the fall.

This strike affected more than just writers and did serious damage to the economies of areas like NYC and LA, where behind the scenes workers found themselves out of a job since no content was being produced.

"Spore" gets official release date

Will Wright's "Spore" has been in development for a little over a period of time I like to call "Too friggin' long". Spore, a game in which the player designs and creates their own creature from a single-celled organism to watch it grow into a full grown, technologically advanced sentient life form, has

been delayed without a definite date until now.

Spore is set to launch on September 7 of, believe it or not, this year! The game is currently being released for PC, Mac, DS, and mobile device. Consoles have been discussed but nothing has been made official.

The game play is one that can be described as "god-like". The player oversees the development of the creatures, makes sure they survive on their planet and then follows them along as they technologically advance themselves through time. IN fact, nearly every element of the game involves some form of customization, making it nearly impossible for any two players to have matching cities, creatures, or anything else. Once the player's characters achieve the ability to travel in space the game reaches its peak feature.

Players can "travel" to other players' worlds and mingle with other species. While not too much is known about the specifics of the leveling system, rest assured that a group of no-girlfriend, pimple-faced 30 year olds living at home will be playing non-stop in the quest to be the most technologically-advanced being... within a video game.



"Spore", which now has a slated release date for September 7, gives players the chance to design and evolve a creature from a single cell to a whole civilization.

"Felafel" a little-seen dark comedy

By **PHIL NARSH**
Columnist
PSN5001@PSU.EDU

As the newest addition to The Capital Times action-news team, I can't think of another indie movie I'd rather feature for my first review than a little-known flick from 2001, titled "He Died with a Felafel in His Hand". The title alone was enough to make me place it at the top of my Netflix queue. I had no idea what it would be about and no idea who would be in it; all I knew was, that if a movie with such a name existed, I needed to see it. And low and behold, "Felafel" has become one of my all time favorite independent films.

Based on a 1994 novel of the same name, this Australian dark comedy follows the early adult life of Danny (Noah Taylor), a 20-something-year-old writer, as he moves from one shared household to the next, all the while avoiding his landlords, while attempting to write the next great Australian



novel. The movie begins at the end with the foretold death, and then rewinds to the start of it all. The first house revealed is a shanty, an all-but condemned little place in Brisbane, where Danny lives with a handful of other guys and one girl, Sam (Emily Hamilton). The rent hasn't been paid in over four months, and there isn't much to do but play the guitar, argue with

each other and smash toads with golf clubs. Here Danny is stricken with writers' block (as well as depression and loathing) due to his girlfriend dumping him for his best friend. Flip (Brett Stewart) tells Danny that he should write a story to "Penthouse" to make some cash, which Danny does, retelling a hilarious tale of masturbation gone horribly wrong. Danny pines for a muse to inspire him to write, and almost on cue, Anya (Romane Bohringer), a dark and rather mysterious young woman, arrives to rent the spare room. Here the guys write up "the rules of the game." One: All intelligence must be shared. Two: There is to be no lying, cheating or backstabbing. The guy who gets a first date (with Anya) wins; the loser has to run around the house three times with his underwear on his head." But much to their surprise Sam ends up with Anya, during their massive pagan ritual in the backyard, which ends up forcing Danny, among others, to pack up and leave.

The film comes to a screeching halt as Danny moves into his next home, this time taking refuge with a Lennon-obsessed, Y2K survivalist with conspiracy theories. As the pace slowly picks up, Danny is rejoined by some of his previous roomies, including Sam, who found his new address by calling his Mum. Unfortunately, the police follow him there too (in search of the exorbitant amount of money owed in rent and damages from his previous flat), and this time somebody gets shot in the ensuing dramatic confrontation. Danny and Sam strengthen their friendship and eventually hook up in his apartment, but Danny's travels aren't over yet.

The final living arrangement of the film is in Sydney. Tensions are high in the white-walled house where Danny resides with a psychotic drama-queen, among others. Sam and Anya both show up this time. At first they fight, then they make out, then Danny makes out with Anya, and then Sam

storms off in a rage. Danny falls back into depression and writers' block, realizing it was Sam who was his inspiration all along, and locks himself in his room.

Will Danny ever make up with Sam? Will Danny ever become a successful, published writer? And how does one go about dying while eating a felafel? I won't spoil it for you...

Though there are no big name actors (aside from Noah Taylor), "Felafel" is still a bizarre, hilarious and refreshingly original piece of Aussie-fried gold. Perhaps a little too dark for some, "Felafel" touches on issues of sex, homosexuality, violence, drug use, and Middle Eastern food. At one point it displays a rather shocking attempted suicide scene that may be difficult to watch. However, if you're a dark soul like me who loves intelligently quirky films that dabble with existentialism and the meaning of life, I highly recommend "He Died with a Felafel in His Hand" to you.