

# Little shop of honors

By JENNIFER RUFO  
Staff Writer

Located on the second floor of the main building, a trendy center is dedicated to making students' lives better. Open to anyone who needs it, this "little shop of honors" is known as the Learning Center.

The purpose of the Learning Center is to provide students with information, guidance, and academic enrichment.

This semester, the Learning Center is offering numerous workshops and study programs to help any student succeed. All workshops will be held in Room 203 Main. They will be offered during common hour on the following Wednesdays:

\*Sept. 6 --- Using Time Effectively: Don't know when it's time for a break or time to work? This is the workshop for you!

\*Sept. 20 --- Getting

Organized for Quizzes and Tests: Deadlines and test dates are approaching. Are you prepared?

\* Oct. 4 --- Taking Class Notes that Really Work: This workshop is for you if you find that you cannot read your own handwriting because you are so busy taking notes in class and miss the material

\* Oct. 25 --- Reading Effectively: Learn how to read in a manner that works for you and your academic career

\* Nov. 1 --- Using Your Memory Effectively: This workshop will teach you how to memorize with flair. P.S. This will help you on tests and quizzes

\* Nov. 15 --- Taking Tests and Exams: Don't stress out over tests and exams; learn how to deal with all the anxiety that comes along with those Q & A's.

\* Nov. 29 --- Last Minute Exam Preparation: This workshop is right in time

before your big exams.

\* Dec. 6 --- Managing Stress: How many feel stressed out over the college workload or everything in general? Learn how to deal with stress!

"We are also emphasizing the importance of study groups. If students need help putting one together, we can assist them," said Norma Notzold, a key element to the Learning Center's success.

Study groups can help boost grades and find some new friends. The Learning Center is an ideal place to learn how to create, manage, and maintain a study group. All you have to do is submit your request - it couldn't be easier.

Remember, the Learning Center is there for your benefit. So, seize the day and take advantage of the great opportunities it has to offer. Maybe you'll meet some new friends along the way.

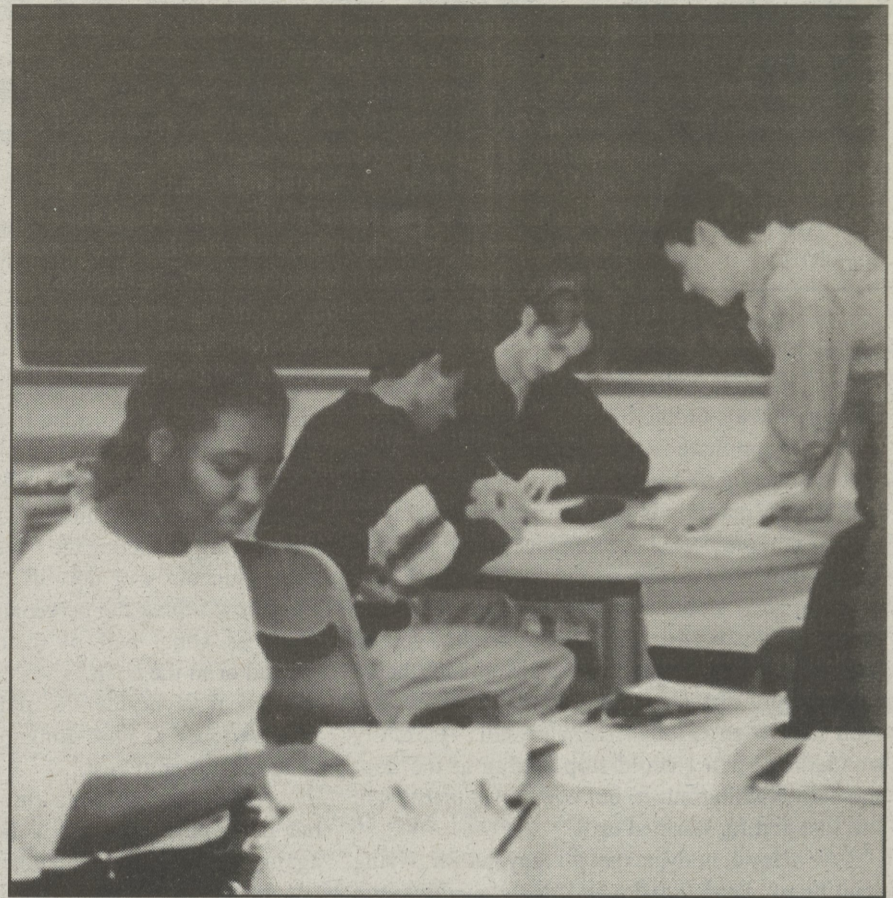


Photo by Anteia Consorto

Students study studiously in the Learning Center during a study group session.

## Music review

### "Trout Mask Replica" by Captain Beefheart

By ERIC MAYER  
Staff Writer

Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band "Trout Mask Replica" (1969) Recommended First Listening Experience: "Pachuco Cadaver"

Captain Beefheart is perhaps the best-kept secret in every modern composer's record collection. Every musician from Joe Strummer to Tom Waits drops the word "Beefheart" in their obligatorily self-indulgent interviews, though few traditional music-lovers have ever really listened to him extensively. Now, nineteen years since Beefheart decided to quit recording music, the full effect of his wide-reaching influence is becoming known. With Radiohead's Beefheart-inspired "I Might Be Wrong" getting airplay on MTV, a series of in-depth biographies and music studies being released in bookstores across the country, and a BBC documentary garnering excellent reviews, the music-listening population seems to be more open to Beefheart's music in the twenty-first century than the twentieth.

Longtime drummer John French (nicknamed "Drumbo" by Beefheart) is currently writing a book of his own experiences as a member of Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, called "Through the Eyes of Magic." To gain assistance with the actual writing of his book, French implored Internet-using Beefheart fans to ask the questions they wanted to know the answers to. He answered many of their questions on "The Captain Beefheart Radar Station" (<http://www.beefheart.com>), where much of the information used in this article was attained. French's book has stirred renewed interest in the "Beefheart mystique," as well as Captain Beefheart's most enduring masterpiece, the unequalled "Trout Mask Replica."

Don Van Vliet, alias Captain Beefheart, emerged from the psychedelic 1960's as the decade's most pronounced genius and seminal influence. There are numerous reasons for this status, the greatest of which being the release of 1969's "Trout Mask Replica." This epochal recording had a polarizing effect on every listener it touched: critiques were rife with either confusion or ebullience, sometimes in the same review. There seemed to be no comparison worth mentioning that cap-

tured the mad cacophony of this double-record set. Some members of the music industry, including the album's producer, Frank Zappa, described Beefheart's music as the collision of free jazz with delta blues. Many others described it as a "drug frenzy" that had no real creative potential sans those provided by narcotics. With time and more expansive listening, "Trout Mask Replica" appeared as something altogether different: experimental symphonic composition played with blues instruments.

Captain Beefheart grew up in the Mojave Desert with no formal music training. An artistic prodigy, he was featured on television for his small sculptures of animals at the age of three. At the age of twelve, he was offered a scholarship to study art in Europe. His parents declined the offer on his behalf, claiming that "all artists were queers," and hoped the disappointment would extinguish his creative passions. On the contrary, his imagination flourished, and a new lust for music along with it. He began to sing with several failed local bands, a result of his increasing fondness for R&B records.

After his Magic Band was formulated in the mid-60's, a series of local successes grounded Beefheart's footing in the blues-rock-pop arena. In September 1967, he released his first album, the revolutionary "Safe as Milk," and began to drift deeper into the experimental. "Trout Mask Replica" was the zenith of this experimentation.

For eight months in 1969, Beefheart composed the dense, cacophonous music that would become this record while living and working in a Woodland Hills, California house with his band. Using the assistance of drummer John French for the instrumental arrangement, the Magic Band memorized and perfected twenty-three of Beefheart's songs over this period. For these musicians, however, the experience was far from magic: The band lived in intolerable conditions; the most impenetrable of which was Beefheart himself, who constantly abused his players throughout their stay.

In the summer of 1969, Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band recorded their album in a period of four hours. "Trout Mask Replica" was released soon there-

## Fall Commencement

By MEREDITH BECKER  
Staff Writer

On Saturday, December 15, 2001 Penn State Delaware County will be holding its commencement ceremony for this semester's seniors.

Those students looking to graduate this semester needed to file an intent to graduate with the registrar by September 10.

Graduations held at Delco for students are usually very small, "intimate" commencements. Last fall's ceremony graduated more than 70 students from our campus.

Senior Shannon Bonner, a Liberal Arts major, is looking to perhaps go on to law school after her graduation.

Senior "LJ," a Speech

Comm. major with a minor in international studies, is one of many adult students on campus, after graduation she is hoping to get married and start a family.

For those students looking to keep ties with PSU you can join the Alumni program, which is currently reporting more than 145,000 members.

Beginning in 1870, nine years after PSU's first graduating class reportedly in a chemistry room in Old Main at University Park, Penn State's Alumni program is, "one of the largest dues paying alumni association in the country."

For information on how to join up with the many PSU alum just go to their website, [www.alumni.psu.edu](http://www.alumni.psu.edu).

after, establishing Beefheart as one of the most adventurous artists in history and the most revered cult figure of the twentieth century.

In the aftermath that followed, the sources of Beefheart's genius became clear. The disharmony of Ornette Coleman, the energy of Charlie Patton, the tonality of Son House, the complexity of Miles Davis, and the presence of Edgar Varese were all partly responsible for Beefheart's unique compositions. However, this is not to say that Beefheart was nothing more than a clever recycling machine; his fusion remains strikingly original.

"Trout Mask Replica" has elicited the same response from listeners for over 30 years: initial hatred and eventual dependence. Musicians such as Pavement, Beck, PJ Harvey, and Tom Waits have cited Beefheart as an influence, but even more artists find inspiration in the Captain's uncompromised vision. His "visual" assessment of music has opened the minds of legions, as has his other artistic forms, most notably his paintings (Beefheart quit music in 1982 to pursue his growing art career).

Broad adjectives can do a fine job of pigeonholing music, but an album like "Trout Mask Replica" demands a more focused second-by-second exposition in order to comprehend its complexity. Attaining an understanding of this record will provide clarity to any sense of musical taste by destroying preconceived notions of aural stimulation. Intellectual overstatements aside, "Trout Mask Replica" is simply an extremely enjoyable listening experience that requires exclusive study. Get the growing pains out of the way; pick this album up as soon as you can.