

Eye on Entertainment

LEAD US IN THE MACABRAY!

Book Review of Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*

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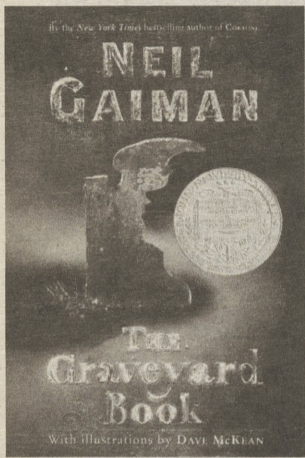


Photo courtesy of amazon.com

Neil Gaiman's name is well-known in most geek circles, but he is still relatively unknown to many. He has written comic books, novels, children's book, screenplays, poetry, directed a short, silent film, and has probably dabbled in much more. Last year, amidst the waves of teenage-fueled Twilight love, a little novel was released to the public. It was called *The Graveyard Book*, and it is a fitting novel for the Halloween season. The book was inspired by Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, but was dressed up in the Gothic styling of Neil Gaiman. The book details episodic adventures of a boy named Nobody Owens whose parents are murdered on the first page and is then taken in by a ghost family in a graveyard by the end of the first chapter. All the individual parts come to form an interconnected story by the end of the novel. Although it may seem a fairly stereotypical children's book on the surface, Neil Gaiman, as always, injects philosophical musings and pointed reflections about life subtly amidst a child's fantasy. Fundamentally, the book is about growing up and putting away childish fantasies to make room for the life that is still to come.

While some may say that the novel is dark, this is only because of the general feelings we attach to graveyards, to death, and to dark and mysterious creatures. These places and people make up the home and family that Nobody Owen's comes to know. As the book meanders around his experiences, the reader is unable to avoid feeling the same love he has for his ghostly parents, his vampire guardian, his werewolf teacher, and his other friends.

For a book set amidst death, it is quite preoccupied with life. Nobody Owen's states, "I want to see life. I want to hold it in my hands. I want to leave a footprint on the sand of a desert island. I want to play football with people. I want," he said, and then he paused and he thought. "I want everything."

The Graveyard Book spent a full year on the New York Times Children's Best Seller List. It was awarded the 2009 Newbery Medal by the American Library Association. Also, it managed to snag the 2009 Hugo Award for Best Novel. The book is still available in book stores along with an audiobook read in the whispery, British tones of Neil Gaiman himself. Gaiman has also made the book tour from last year available via this website: <http://www.mousecircus.com/videtour.aspx>.

From the Vintage Bin

Psychedelic Jungle - The Cramps

By Caitlin Olszewski - *Lion's Eye Generation Editor* - coo5024@psu.edu



Photo courtesy of wendylynchphotography.com

Halloween, being my all-time favorite holiday, solely means two things: Evil Dead movie night, and listening to *Psychedelic Jungle* by The Cramps for the entire month of October. This rockabilly gem with a ghoulish twist is not only innovative, but it also created the subgenre "Psychobilly." If

Elvis Presley were a zombie, paired with a skeleton playing bass, maybe even a howlin' werewolf drummer and ghosts in the background, I would imagine that they would be similar to The Cramps.

In 1981 The Cramps led by husband and wife duo Lux Interior and Poison Ivy Rorschach released their masterpiece *Psychedelic Jungle*. Their second, later to be considered their greatest album, starts off with a real killer "Green Fuzz." This song is a rockabilly declaration that the band is green, slimy, and coming your way.

With thick bass lines and a sprinkling of 12 bar blues, "Goo Goo Muck" also incorporates Zappa-esque howls and caws to concoct a horrific mixture with ghostly overtones. The song "Voodoo Idol" uses a raw and edgy sound as Lux's spine-chilling vocals compliment the overall

macabre theme.

One of the more catchy songs on the album, "The Crusher" is a morbid dance song where Lux encourages everyone to do such dances as "The Eye Gouge" and "The Hammerlock." Lux shows his twisted sense of humor through one of the albums better tracks, "Don't Eat Stuff Off the Sidewalk." Through voodoo-like drum rhythms and eerie guitar riffs, Lux croons, "You don't need it/ So don't eat it/ No, don't eat stuff off the sidewalk."

Overall, I cannot help but smile at this entire album and think that it is pure genius. With Poison Ivy's rhythm guitar and Lux Interior's nonsense lyrics *Psychedelic Jungle* is sort of a satirical ode to old school horror b-movies. With their characteristic groove, classic sound, innovative psychobilly rock, and perfect delivery, The Cramps are undeniably a must-have addition to any Halloween playlist.

Wildly Maxxed Out!

By Caitlin Olszewski *Lion's Eye Eye on Generation Editor* - coo5024@psu.edu

With the recent movie adaptation of Maurice Sendak's children's book *Where The Wild Things Are*, Spike Jonze proves that inside all of us is a wild thing. Along with novelist Dave Eggers, Jonze takes the short children's novel and adds depth to create an emotional plot. What makes this film unique from others out today is that it uses no animation or computer generated characters (only the faces were digital). The movie is almost dream-like through its beautiful cinematography. The characters, although monsters, personify different aspects about being a kid; it focuses particularly on the main character Max. The only thing viewers should know is unlike its original book format, the movie is not only for children. The complex plot and intense emotions frightened and sometimes bored small children. The plot revolves around Max's estranged relationship with his mother, who's preoccupied with her new boyfriend. Craving attention, Max runs away to the land of the wild things. The movie follows his adventures and relationships with the monsters.

Not only is this movie a monsterpiece, the soundtrack is also worth mentioning. The album features Karen O. and The Kids and is the perfect accompaniment for the film. It's like indie rock meets The Polyphonic Spree meets juvenile storytelling. Through collaborations with indie rocks finest, Karen O. has created one of the best soundtracks in recent memory.

Jonze and Eggers have done a masterly job expanding and interpreting Sendak's story to create an epic film. Finally! A "younger audience" movie done right without Seth Rogen or talking chipmunks. *Where The Wild Things Are* is a fantasy film without all the happily ever after formula hogwash. The did a perfect job transforming the story into something our age group or older will surely relate to and enjoy.

Networks Axing Shows

By Andrew Shaner - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer* - ads5249@psu.edu

This season is not shaping up to be the best in TV history, at least not as far as longevity is concerned. Series are getting cut left and right, with networks demanding higher standards in ratings due to the rough economy. While some series may seem obvious choices for cancellation, while others are a complete shock.

In what may seem unsurprising to some, Joss Whedon's "Dollhouse" will be cancelled after 13 episodes this season. It's no great shock to Whedonites who should be used to gems like "Firefly" and "Buffy: The Vampire Slayer" being cancelled. This is typically due to the fact that Fox traditionally slots Whedon's shows on Friday nights, a ratings graveyard. Also cut from Fox's lineup for the fall were the shows "Prison Break," "King of the Hill," and "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles."

ABC got rid of cult favorite "Pushing Daisies" much to the chagrin of fans. An online petition to bring it back was unsuccessful. The network is also axing "Cupid," "Samantha Who?," "Dirty Sexy Money," and critical flop "The Unusuals." In a strange move, NBC decided to cancel its primetime cop drama "Southland" after having renewed it 5 months prior, leaving cast, crew, and viewers annoyed. NBC is further cutting "Knight Rider" and "Lipstick Jungle" as well as shipping critical ratings hits like "My Name is Earl" and "Medium" to other networks (CBS and ABC respectively).

CBS seems to be the only network keeping more shows than not, cutting "Harper's Island" and "Without a Trace" from its primetime set. Most other shows like "Survivor" and the "Big Bang Theory" have been renewed for more than one season. The CW is renewing most of its tried and true series cutting only its newer efforts like "The Game," "Privileged," and "Reaper." As TV networks continue to cut shows, fans can only hope that their favorites are renewed season after season because at this rate there's no telling who's next.