arts

# **Big Country's 'Crossing':**

United States

### By RON YEANY **Collegian Staff Write**

"THE CROSSING" Big Country, Mercury 812870-1

If you haven't heard of Big Country by now, you soon will. Big Country is an English band who has enjoyed moderate success in England with a Top 10 single "Fields Of Fire." "Fields" is contained on their debut album The Crossing, which is undoubtedly some of the best rock music that I've heard in years.

Big Country is a very young band, which only leads me to believe they are going to set the tone for, rock music in the 80s. Big Country grew out of the Skids, another British act that only enjoyed moderate success in Great Britain on the singles

The Skids also enjoyed moderate critical success for their music, but they failed to last very long. Guitarist Stuart Adamson said the band was fading into the fashion of futurism and left the Skids in early 1981. Big Country got its start from Adamson and Bruce Watson, a guitarist and punk afficianado who was working at a job scrubbing out nuclear submarines.

After a disastrous tour with Alice Cooper in Spring 1982, Big Country settled down to do their homework and decide which direction the band was going in. Part of that soulseeking lead to the teaming of Adamson and Watson with bassist Tony Butler and drummer Mark Brzezicki, two very talented studio musicians who were fresh off stints

with Pete Townshend and the Pretenders.

The Crossing was recorded earlier this year and is now breaking upon the American rock scene with a buzz of expectation rarely seen from rock critics. And with one listen to The Crossing, it is obvious why Big Country is predicted to hit it very big in the

To classify Big Country is impossible. That is one of the unique qualities of this band. Big Country has really forged its own genre in rock music. If I were pressed to take a stab at it, I would try combining the originality of U2, the down-to-earth approach of Springsteen and the intricate, full sound of Asia

In fact, a lot of comparisons can be made to U2 here. Big Country's vocals sound almost like a cross between Springsteen and U2's Bono. Also, one of rock's premeire geniuses, Steve Lillywhite, produced The Crossing. Lillywhite's recent work has included U2's War.

But the most amazing thing about Big Country is their music. The Crossing is absolutely essential rock. Nothing is wasted here; every sound is pertinent to the song, and every song hinges on the album as a whole. "In A Big Country," which opens side one, is an excellent song. Simply excellent. Big Country takes this rock anthem and weaves it into a tale spun around a mystical bagpipe-type sound that sets the stage for this debut album.

The album continues on a frantic pace with "Inwards," which has an utmost immediacy to it. "Chance" opens with oriental-type guitar licks that sets up an excellent "break-up" song that shatters the standard of mushy, operatic love-gone-wrong songs. "Now the skirts hang so heavy around your

head/ that you never knew you were young/ Because you played chance with a lifetime's

romance/ and the price was far too long." "Fields of Fire," their moderately successful British hit, follows. The best way to describe this one is a new-wave Bonanza theme. It has the airy feeling of the great plains while you can just picture horses trotting across the open expanse.

Many of the songs here roll up a picture in the mind, as if a slide projector in the back of the mind turns on an image for each song. Such is true for "The Storm," which closes side one. "Storm" sets an eerie feeling as the song begins, and turns into a "The ballad of. . ." type setting.

very domestic song. Here, the dust bowl days and ghost towns of the midwest are brought to mind. "See how the bowls are empty/ see how the arms reach/ see where the butter melted/ see where the alters creak/ Just as you sow shall you reap."

The urgency of "Inwards" is also found on side two with "Lost Patrol." But "Patrol" is a very desparate, tragic song about death and decay. "Close Action" and "1000 Stars" follow. Here is the weakest part of the album. But even when the themes and images are faltering, the music stands on its

The album closes with "Porrohman," a wide-sweeping arrangement that sounds like a rocked-up Twilight Zone introduction that ends with an army marching away. The troops have been very successful. Big Country has conquered as the undefeated corps of rock music

And in the end, Big Country is superb. The

album or the band is not perfect, but they really have very little room to improve. In a



# 'Eating Raoul' is a tasteless delight

#### **By SHAWN ISRAE** Collegian Staff Writer

By ROGER MUNNS

latest plot twists.

**AP Television Writer** 

brains out at the moment," Brown

of daily reading. "Diamedes has

perback with one hand, gesturing

Associated Press Write

"Eating Raoul" is one of the tamer things that go on in Paul Bartel's offbeat black-and-blue comedy that, after almost an eternity, finally made it to State College. If you're in the mood for some thoroughly off-the-wall humor, "Eating

Raoul" is just the ticket. The "heroes" of this 84-minute opus are Paul Bland (Bartel) and his loving wife Mary (Mary Waronov). He's a snooty wine salesman; she's a nutritionist; they're both closet gourmets who abhor the inconsiderate white-collar swingers who constantly infiltrate their neighborhood to hold nearby parties.

## film review

Paul and Mary's dream is, as one might guess, to open up a gourmet restaurant in the country called, appropriately, Chez Bland. One night, an act of providence makes their dream more real. When a stray guest from a nearby orgy assaults Mary in her living room. Paul sends the boor to his maker by conking him on the noggin with a Corman's more profitable films of the '70s, such "cheap" is not necessarily synonymous with skillet. It is then that our ingenious couple has

their sweet inspiration: lure the regular throng of Earth" and "Born to Kill" - films that will live white-collar perverts into their apartment using unspeakable sexual delights as a lure, then knock them out. lift their cash and stuff them in the trash compactor. Dastardly but brilliant. All goes fairly well for the Blands until Raoul, a shifty locksmith, offers to take the bodies off their hands for a substantial cut of the booty. As

the title implies, he eventually winds up with the short end of the proverbial stick. "Eating Raoul" is essentially a B-movie so conceptually wild it almost defies even being viewed. To see this film the whole way through is

virtually to admit one's own barbarism. But a-HA, kids! That's the whole point of Bartel's little exercise - to show the implicit barbarism in modern society. The viewer will probably not confuse "Eating

Raoul" with the kind of emotionally and intellectually layered, sophisticated farce we've all come to expect from the likes of Woody Allen and Monty Python. But, I admit, the film has its own perverse sort of charm. This is not completely surprising, considering Bartel and Waronov are working in the terms of a genre they've known for many years.

Bartel, 45, was a prime mover of the mid-'60s "underground" and the creator of some of Roger as "Death Race 2000," "Last Days of Man on "bad."

forever in all-night drive-in movie shows and on late-night Home Box Office. He also makes Paul Bland a nicely engaging character with his bald pate, perfectly coiffed beard, repressively stuffy suits and priggish dialogue. Waronov, who starred in such low-budget classics as "Hollywood Boulevard" (with Bartel) and "Angel of H.E.A.T.," featuring Marilyn Chambers in a 'legitimate'' role, is also engaging as Mary, a believable closet sensualist and practical joker as well as loving wife.

The supporting cast fares rather well, too Robert Beltran is magnetic and amusing in the role of Raoul. Buck Henry is fun to watch as a lecherous bank manager who comes on to Mary. Susan Saiger is surprisingly effective as a placid housewife who's a whip-brandishing dominatrix in her spare time.

their point across, if not painlessly or tastefully, with enough swiftness and satire to keep the viewer reasonably entertained. "Eating Raoul" may be no more than a sometimes obvious ironic fable told in B-movie styles, but at least it's done by people who have a passion for the craft of shooting on the cheap. More, they know that

# ABC registers another fantasy show tonight with 'Hotel' **By FRED ROTHENBERG**

### NEW YORK — During the Depression, filmmaker Busby Berkeley made leggy spectacles to help a nation forget breadlines. ABC seems to be taking similar flights of fancy in these tough economic times, selling fantasies, fairy-tale endings and stars, stars and more stars in tonight's debut of "Hotel."

## television preview

'Hotel'' is the seventh series on ABC's schedule stamped out of executive producer Aaron Spelling's dream factory. Supremely slick and gaudily opulent, "Hotel," from the book by Arthur Hailey, is not the Holiday Inn. Immediately following Spelling's rich and steamy 'Dynasty'' on ABC's Wednesday night schedule, "Ho-

to assume different characters. "You really have to live with a book," he said later. AMES, Iowa — As Doug Brown Brown, 47, one of the few dramat- and bake at the same time. began reading "The Iliad" on the ic readers still on the air, has been

following in kitchens and cars a week for nearly 20 years. His dio's early days. "People had more across the state tuned in to catch the show, "The Book Club," is a 50-year time and radio was the all-around tradition at public radio station medium," said Mike Havice. an "They're busy bashing their WOI.

Hundreds of listeners write WOI said before he began his 30 minutes every year. "I shivered every day," wrote one Brown, he said. "But normally, I had a couple of very good innings." woman, recounting the many voices don't have the time. Besides, I could

of Homer's classic, holding the pa- Christmas Carol." "Thanks for your interpretation with the other and changing voices of Madame Bovary. However, I

While there are only a few radio radio one recent morning, a loyal broadcasting the classics five days readers left, they flourished in ra-

> associate journalism professor at Drake University in Des Moines. "It's always a treat" to listen to

would take three weeks to listen to it read."

"It took 10 weeks to read Moby

spoil the rolls," said another wom- ask, 'Are you still reading Moby an, explaining it was hard to listen Dick?' Which meant I was the only one around at the end, I suppose."

four other Iowa stations each day really was a book club when it started in 1927. Brown said. "We don't lend books anymore, but the name stuck."

Brown, who as a child had wanted to be a sportscaster, also makes frequent appearances as commen-Then he plunged into his rendition in Brown's rendition of Dickens' "A read the book in three days, while it tator for televised college wrestling matches and is equally at home as

Bette Davis is given top billing as the aristocratic owner of the St. Gregory's, but her contract calls for limited appearances. ABC says she won't show up in every episode. In tonight's two-hour pilot, she appears in four scenes

The other major characters touch the right demographic bases. Connie Selleca plays the beautiful assistant manager, Christine Francis, who walks off the street and, without any hotel experience, begins running the hotel. Shea Farrell is the handsome head of guest relations who, based on the pilot, will fall in love much

This is the same format milked by Spelling's "Love Boat" and "Fantasy Island." His shows are candy for the cerebrum. Although "Hotel" is never memorable, it does aspire to being a

Boat." This is the classiest of Spelling's seven current hit shows, which include "T.J. Hooker," "Matt Houston" and "Hart to Hart." In tonight's pilot, the moral issue concerns a prostitute, played by Morgan Fairchild, who is raped in the St. Gregory's Hotel by a bunch of boys on prom night. Does she have any rights? Should she press charges?

thinks she should. He considers the violation also a violation of his precious hotel. Brolin brings his distinct style of non-emotional acting to the starring role of Peter McDermott, the bachelor

heart into his roles.

series — will be a safe haven.

too often

tel" is bound to be heavily booked this season Every week, elegant guest stars will check into the hotel, involve themselves in flimsy and whimsical plots about faded romance or blooming love and check out before we can be charged for an extra day's thought.

tad more meaningful than just a landlocked "Love

The hotel manager, Peter McDermott (James Brolin).

host for WOI's classical music seg

