

Michael Penn creates a name for himself

by Robb Frederick
Entertainment Editor

Some things, fortunately, do not run in the family. As brothers Sean and Christopher Penn easily mastered the art of "moronic jocular" acting, their older sibling Michael spent his time in another type of studio, creating an intimate, soul-searching album which salvages hope for the Penns' family name.

On *March*, his RCA solo debut, Michael Penn combines his Beatlesque writing with a basic acoustic arrangement to produce honest songs with universal appeal.

Penn's work begins with "No Myth," *March's* catchy debut single. The track, which has received heavy rotation on both radio and video markets, has been forceful enough to establish Penn as a promising new artist.

Penn's vocals, backed by a minimalized instrumentation, illustrate the emptiness which accompanies the demise of a serious relationship and the frustration of beginning another.

This melancholy subject matter carries into "Half Harvest," which emphasizes the narrator's feelings of disappointment at the end of a relationship.

"Cause when this whole production closes / this innocence fails, / (and we weren't supposed to)," Penn morosely sings.

The tempo of *March* accelerates on "This & That," a track which is propelled by Penn's forceful guitar chords and an irresistible chorus.

"Brave New World," perhaps the disc's most powerful track, captures the essence of Bob Dylan's occasional rebellious, frenzied delivery.

The song finds a glimmer of hope in the midst of Armageddon as a man attempting to escape "the third world war" is momentarily distracted by a beautiful woman taking similar action.

Penn races through his lyrics, pausing for breath only during the song's summarizing chorus.

"This may not be my best day / but this ain't no golden age / You looked pretty on the freeway / Let's drive into the brave new world," he

sings.

Although the subject of much of Penn's writing revolves around the disintegration of emotional relationships, his compositions are presented in an upbeat manner which disguises the unpleasant undertones.

March's most upbeat moment comes during the song "Big House," which fondly recounts the childhood pastime of ringing doorbells and running. The track describes the price of maturity and a yearning for returned innocence.

Penn's vibrant vocals are emphasized by the release's sparse instrumental accompaniment. The tracks on *March* utilize the basic performance structure to compensate for the lack of contributing musicians.

Along with his vocals, Penn provides guitar work and drum programming for the entire release, as well as most of the bass.

Penn's primary accompaniment comes from collaborator Patrick Warren, who contributes to the release's intriguing sound by playing his Chamberlain, a primitive synthesizerlike instrument.

Warren has worked with Penn since their union in the early eighties with the L.A. band Doll Congress.

The band's substandard success led the pair to dissolve the group, allowing Penn to further hone his individual writing skills.

Penn's refined lyrical style provides a mature, deeply emotional basis for the material on *March*.

But the metaphors he chooses are at times too abstract for simple comprehension. The songs initially seem meaningless, and only a thorough reading of Penn's lyrics (mercifully provided in the disc's sleeve) allows listeners to truly appreciate his use of the language.

Although sometimes frustrating, this flaw does little to detract from the fresh musical perspective showcased on *March*. The release initially appears as an energetic mixture of pop culture and traditional romanticism, but further listening reveals a degree of potential rarely noticeable on a debut recording. This will definitely not be the last release Michael Penn signs his name to.

Entertainment

Richard Gere meets a *Pretty Woman*

by Christi Luden
Collegian Staff Writer

What would be the first thing to come to your mind if you heard about a man who hired a hooker for a week while on a business trip in Hollywood, California? Probably the same demented ideas as most people in the world. Now, erase those thoughts from your mind and replace them with happiness, sadness, and anger all at once. The emotions are wonderfully portrayed in the new release *Pretty Woman*.

Richard Gere plays Edward, an extremely wealthy business tycoon who is about to land the biggest deal of his life. Due to his most recent accomplishment, he is spending a week away from his New York home attending business dinners and parties. His girlfriend dumps him because she talks to his secretary more than she talks to him, so he is frustrated and searching for a date for the week.

This is where Vivian (Julia Roberts) comes into the picture. Vivian is a high school drop-out who comes to California chasing a man she loves. The relationship fails, and Vivian, who is proud to return to her home, finds herself alone. After getting a few waitressing jobs, she meets Kit, who introduces her to the world of prostitution.

One evening, as Vivian and Kit are hanging out on their street corner, a very expensive car speeds by and comes to a stop. Vivian approaches the car and finds Edward, who has never driven a standard, fiddling with the gear shift. Vivian asks if she can help him, and personally

shows him directions for a fee of \$20.

When the pair reaches Edward's hotel, he asks Vivian to stay the night. She happily agrees and they proceed into his exotic hotel.

Picture this: a rich man in a three-piece-suit walks into a Beverly Hills hotel with a woman in a skin-tight mini-dress and long black boots. The laughs start as man of the stuffy old men and women gasp at this "horrible" sight.

The night is not a typical one for Vivian. Edward orders champagne and the two proceed to watch "I Love Lucy" on television. Eventually, a night of

disappointed, Vivian returns to the hotel and is confronted by Barney, the manager. Barney calls a friend in the hotel and arranges for Vivian to get an evening gown. Barney also gives her etiquette lessons and coaches her on appropriate language and manners.

When Edward returns from his office, his breath is taken away by his beautiful "employee."

The rest of the week is filled with parties and dinners which provide many funny and delicate moments between these seemingly different people.

Finally, Vivian does the two taboo things in a hooker's life. She kisses Edward on the lips and tells him she loves him. According to Kit, who gives a surprise visit, Prostitutes are not to get too close to their clients.

The relationship also affects Edward's life. His lawyer and friend notices a preoccupation and softening in his buddy Edward. To everyone's surprise the workaholic even calls to take a day off.

Everything goes well until the week comes to a close. Edward and Vivian disagree on their hopes and plans for the relationship, and the film postpones the traditional happy ending that the audience hopes for.

Producers Arnon Milchan and Steven Reuther, assisted by the direction of Gary Marshall, do a superb job of developing the characters in a way which promotes mixed emotions in the audience. The delicacy and awful truths of prostitution, wealth, and prejudice come into play to create a must-see movie for audiences of all types.

Review

passion erupts, after which Vivian gets ready to leave.

"Gets ready to leave" are key words here. Edward's lawyer calls to inform him of a business dinner that evening with a pivotal man in Edward's deal. Since Edward needs a date, he tells Vivian to name her price. She responds by setting a fee of \$3000 for the week.

The following day, Edward hands Vivian a substantial amount of money and tells her to buy some new clothes. She goes to the swanky Hollywood stores wearing her "work clothes" and is treated rudely by every salesperson she meets. Therefore, she returns with nothing.

Near tears and very

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