

Memphis Belle takes to the air

by Floyd J. Csir
The Collegian

It's 1943. The air war rages in Western Europe between Allied forces and Nazi Germany. B-17s fly bombing runs daily, attempting to cut off Germany's wartime manufacturing plants.

The Memphis Belle and her crew have completed 24 consecutive missions and they only need one more before they can go home. And of course the last mission is a thrilling, hair-raising roller coaster flight.

Matthew Modine plays the Belle's captain, Eric Stoltz is the radio operator and John Lithgow makes an appearance as a Public Relations ringleader. Modine and Stoltz are just two of the Belle's ten airmen.

Producer David Puttnam was inspired by *Top Gun*, but he saw a need for something more substantial. "I wanted to have the technical skills of a *Top Gun* and have people caring, the human element."

oblivious to the dirty side of war and wants the Belle's crew to be shining examples for America, just because they would be the first bomber crew to complete their tour of duty.

Yet, toward the film's end, Lithgow appreciates the sacrifice so many airmen have made. After reading a letter from a deceased serviceman's mother, he understands this sacrifice.

"I hope when this war is all over, there will be a better way to solve the world's problems," she writes.

More intriguing than the anti-propaganda stance of *Belle* is the last mission. Blazing machine guns, burning engines and falling airmen are just a few of the many exciting scenes in this film.

Matthew Modine looks like the next Burt Lancaster, and although he doesn't have Burt's commanding, biblical voice, he's quietly effective.

The rest of the gang represents the usual society-in-a-nutshell stereotypes: the geek (Courtney

"Memphis Belle" doesn't barrage the audience with American war propaganda, as did most war movies from the 1950s.

In addition to Puttnam's creativity, the ten actors on the Belle's crew trained in a simulated boot camp for two weeks prior to the film's production.

Stoltz said it was Puttnam's way of getting the guys together, to have them learn each other's reactions and to create a realistic environment for the movie. This is evident as the crew horses around like fraternity brothers and relies on an obsessive need for good luck charms as the specter of death lurks in the background.

Memphis Belle doesn't barrage the audience with American war propaganda, as had been the case with most American war movies from the 1940's. Today's audience isn't embroiled in a war (not yet) and society is more of a conglomeration of special interest groups rather than a unified nation.

Instead of typical propaganda (bombs dropping while symphonic music plays on), the film delicately defies any over-glorification of death. Regardless of nationality, a dead soldier is a dead human who leaves family and friends behind.

John Lithgow's character, a PR man from the Army, is

Gains), the hard-ass (Neil Giuntoli), the hotshot (Tate Donovan), the virgin (Reed Diamond), and the singer (Harry Connick, Jr.).

Despite the obvious limitation in trying to identify with so many characters, the audience can still enjoy the highs and lows of the Memphis Belle and her crew.

In addition, the film's humor relieves some of the dramatic tension, thus entertaining the audience on a balanced scale.

When one of the rookie airmen asks Gunner Neil Giuntoli what advice he would give him for his first mission, Giuntoli replies, "Pull out your gun, shoot your foot and go home!"

The gracefully eloquent script pales in comparison to the somewhat predictable plot.

There are plenty of surprises, however, for even the most callous action addict. Just watching these awesome flying machines sail through white clouds is almost a religious event. If you're in need of good thrill, some humor and a cast full of future Hollywood stars, catch a ride on the *Memphis Belle*. It's a direct hit.

Entertainment

Indigo Girls get depressed New release serves up more of the same

by Robb Frederick
The Collegian

"...May we be found honest about the darkness, more perceptive of the light."

This quote, lifted from the mysterious Dr. Jack Boozer, serves as a cornerstone for *Nomads • Indians • Saints*, the third LP from the Georgia-based Indigo Girls.

Darkness plays an integral part in this release, and the versatile duo of Emily Saliers and Amy Ray are quite honest about what they find in the black depths of their lyrical repertoires.

The subjects raised on *Nomads • Indians • Saints* cover the spectrum of depression, detailing the hardships of life on the road, drug addiction, public apathy, and a craving for acceptance.

This despressing subject matter is easily masked, however, by the energetic, upbeat style of the Indigo Girls' performance.

Saliers and Ray clearly strive for the light as they exchange powerful, emotional lyrics and combine their voices to create the flowing harmonies which appear so rarely in today's mainstream music.

The focused beat of the pair's acoustic guitars, rooted in the folk tradition, forcefully propels

some tracks while delicately restraining others.

Nomads • Indians • Saints begins with the upbeat "Hammer and a Nail," an inspiring commentary against apathy. The track is reminiscent of the single "Closer to Fine," which landed the duo's self-titled second LP on the charts. The song also provides an example of the Indigo

The Indigo Girls' style has lost some of its novelty after three albums.

Girls' environmental beliefs.

"Now I know a refuge never grows / From a chin in a hand and a thoughtful pose / Gotta tend the earth if you want a rose," Saliers repeats in the chorus.

Other highlights include the soothing "Southland in the Springtime," and the simple but effective "1 2 3."

"Southland," a vivid depiction of life on the road, illustrates the

wear and frustration that accompanies constant touring. The tone becomes positive, however, as Saliers fondly anticipates her return home.

On "1 2 3," Ray extends the group's vocal reach and plows into a deep, raspy lead. The chorus may be primitive, but when a pounding guitar kicks in support, the track becomes irresistible.

The technique is a surprising change from the duo's characteristic airy harmonies, and the switch is quite effective.

Nomads • Indians • Saints would benefit from more of these artistic experimentations. Although the Indigo Girls' style has provided a refreshing break from the current formulaic radio fare, the sound has lost some of its novelty after three albums.

After the first few tracks, the music on *Nomads • Indians • Saints* tends to flow together too smoothly. The sparse instrumental accompaniment further restricts the range of Saliers and Ray, isolating the pair in their unplugged guitar jacks.

To keep listeners interested, the Indigo Girls need to expand their style and vary from their folk-heavy sound. After all, even Bob Dylan plugged his amplifier in and went electric.

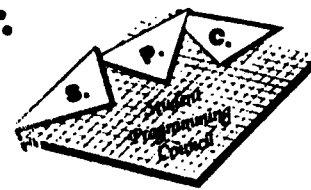


Walt Disney presents
THE LITTLE MERMAID

Produced by Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group
Distributed by Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc.
© 1989 Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group

Thursday	10:30 p.m.
Friday	8:00 p.m.
Saturday	12:00 a.m.
Sunday	8:00 p.m.

Sponsored by:



**COME AND JOIN THE PARTY
IN THE WINTERGREEN LOBBY**

**FOUNDER'S DAY
CELEBRATING 42 YEARS OF BEHREND**

October 30, 1990

10:00 a.m. - 12 Noon

FREE CAKE AND COFFEE

Sponsored By: L.A.

The Collegian

We're worth the wait.