

Columbus sailed the Ocean Blue

by Rick Kastan
The Collegian

World history is laced with questionably motivated heroes, most of them coming from the arts and sciences. It is full of works and feats that walk the fine line between complete genius and bad judgement. It is filled with insane and subversive artists and power-mad scientists. It also has its fair share of obsessed explorers.

Christopher Columbus was one of those men.

And even now, on the quintcentennial of his "discovery," do we have questions about his motivations. Was he a well intentioned genius looking to bring Christianity to the entire world and once again achieve heaven on Earth? Or was he a megalomaniacal madman who only wanted wealth and power to destroy peoples of great, but different cultures?

We may never know the answers to these questions and, sadly, Ridley Scott's new film biography of the man will bring you no closer to any conclusion.

The time: the late 1400's. The place: Europe. It was a time of great fear in the land, the time of the Inquisition. A time when people were afraid to voice any opinion disagreeing with the state or the church for fear of fiery death at the hands of the Inquisitors.

But one man had the strength of vision to go against modern science's teachings, to want to sail around half the globe to find a land of great riches and promise. A man we now 'celebrate' every year on October

12. An Italian. A man named Cristobal Columbo. The man who discovered America.

Or did he? In January of 1492, Columbus DID sail the ocean blue on a trip funded by Queen Isabella of Spain. And he DID sight land on October 12. He sighted the West Indies. In fact, Columbus, 'the man who discovered America' never did set foot on American Soil in all of his four trips to the new world (that accomplishment would go to another Italian, Amerigo Vespucci).

So, what DID Columbus accomplish? Well, by 1492 it was pretty common knowledge that the world was round (although the Church refused to believe it) and even if Columbus HAD reached America he would not by far have been the first (we all know about the Vikings trips to the New World as early as the 1300's).

So what did he accomplish? Well, he paved the way for the destruction of countless races of people in the New World. Directly or indirectly we may never know.

And that brings us back to 1492, the movie. Scott's film tries to show the explorer in a middle of the road way, not condemning him or praising him too highly, and this is one of the film's main flaws-it has no balls.

Ridley Scott has made some very fine movies of great daring in the past. From *Alien* to *Blade Runner* to *Thelma and Louise* (we men can forgive him) he has consistently pushed the boundaries of style and vision in this films. But *1492: Conquest of Paradise* just doesn't fill the

shoes it had made for itself. Granted, the film is beautiful and moving at times, but by making no judgements on Columbus, the film loses our interest about halfway through. Scott doesn't even take advantage of the wonderful Cinemascope screen he has been given use of and the whole film looks like it was made to be played perennially on TV.

Another strike against the movie is it's running time. At 2 1/2 hours some would say that it is too long, but I felt that it wasn't quite long enough. There are so many times in the film that events take place that are not explained at all that the second half of the film becomes completely perplexing and very tiresome.

Acting is very good, especially by Gerard Depardieu as Columbus (who's thick French accent, I must admit, is a little to confusing at times) but I think Sigourney Weaver was mostly wasted as Queen Isabella.

So, should you see *1492*? It depends. If you want to see a daring portrayal of a very mysterious Italian man, no (in fact, if you want that you can just come down and see me) but if you're looking for a history lesson (albeit a flawed one) you may enjoy it. It's like subliminal homework.

Bands and Beers at the Brookside

Rick Kastan
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Looking for something to do on Saturday night?

Yeah, me neither. But if the seemingly endless hours of weekend keggers and boring movie rentals begin to become tiresome, a good (if not interesting) time can be found just around the corner...at the Brookside Tavern.

Yes, the Brookside Tavern.

The beginning of the semester always heralds a major business boom for Erie bars. This year the Brookside says thank-you to Behrend students by adding live bands to its Saturday night schedule. The bands will be on a rotating schedule appearing once every three weeks or so (with a few surprises thrown in periodically).

One of this season's best regulars is the acoustic rock band Rosewood.

Comprised of six musicians, Rosewood is a band perfectly suited for small bars like the

Brookside. It has a rough, throbbing sound that compliments the Brookside's unique atmosphere very well.

Rosewood's six members, Eriettes them all, are: John Pontorero (bass), Gary Peterson (guitar/vocals), Buck Bucklin (guitar/vocals), Bob Aldridge (percussion), Matt Upperman (harmonica/vocals) and Rich Crishock (guitar).

They play original tunes as well as covers of songs from Neil Young, The Grateful Dead, John Cougar, Marshall Tucker and the Beatles.

Rosewood has played numerous Erie bars including Scully's and the Barricks and will return to the Brookside on Saturday, October 31.

So, if you're looking to hear some music and get a good buzz at a fair price (\$2 cover), stop into the Brookside (with proper I.D.) for a few. It's only a short drive to get there and a short walk back home. And if you don't remember where it is...you've probably drank enough already.

SOLUTIONS TO THE FUN PAGE

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The Collegian

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Reed building next to the MAC machine

Hammermill/Zurn near the computer center

Behrend Science lobby

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