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On the Ground, Beneath her Feet

Bot-Man, Volume 3, Issue 6, 1999

HELLO, BARD SECURITY?

YES MAM, WE ARE HAVING A TAKE BACK BARD MARCH NEXT WEEK.

YES MAM, I DO THINK IT’S A GOOD IDEA. WHAT WITH RISING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE ON THE CAMPUS WHY JUST LAST WEEK THREE PROFESSORS WERE VIOLENTLY VIOLATED.

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT THE SOUL OF THIS BARD COULD BECOME A BUNCH OF UNFETTERED HIPPY CHEERLEADERS WITH BARE LEGS MARCHING THROUGH THE CAMPUS WITH A PROPER MADE DANNER AND...

MEANWHILE...

I WAS GREAT TO SPEAK TO THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT BARD.

WE ALWAYS LOVE YOUR TALKS. I HOPE THE VIOLENCE DIDN’T ADD A DASH TO YOUR STAY.

NO, THOUGH I MAY ADMIT BOT-MAN, THAT A DAY IN ANNANDALE TAUGHT ME WHAT IT IS LIKE TO LIVE UNDER A CONSTANT THREAT OF DEATH.

I NOW KNOW THE MEANING OF PEACE. I WILL NOT FAIL SAFE UNTIL I HAVE RETURNED TO THE PEACEFUL HAVEN OF BARD.

HOWEVER, THAT MARCH OF UNHAVED WOMEN HAS THE IDEAL IDEA TO ALREADY I FEEL A NEW ERA OF PEACE UNFOLDING AT BARD.

THERE ARE TWO OF THEM NOW.

THE PATRIARCHS ARE DOWN AND STEALING FOR NIGHT.

WE HELL TO THE SPACE...

GIVE US BACK OUR CAMPUS, YOU MARGUINE PROFESSOR.

LOOK... OVER THERE!

YOU’RE MESSING THE MILLENIUM MARY.

RAHMAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

LUCKILY, HIPPY CAN NEVER KEEP THEIR MINDS ON ONE MOVEMENT FOR LONGER THAN ONE SALLY THE TRICK IS TO DISTRACT THEM AND RUN.

REMEMBER KIDS, NEVER FLY YOUR KITE NEAR POWER-LINES! NOT ONLY IS IT DANGEROUS, BUT YOU’LL MESS UP YOUR KITE.

BUT NOW YOU KNOW AND KNOWING IS HALF THE BATTLE!"
Salman Rushdie Kicks Off National Book Tour at Bard

Author shares passages from ‘The Ground Beneath Her Feet,’ discusses its creation, and responds to audience questions

Acclaimed author Salman Rushdie made a surprise visit to the Bard campus on Monday, April 12, and gave a reading from his new novel, ‘The Ground Beneath Her Feet.’ The appearance preceded the first publicized stop in his American tour at Cooper Union in New York City. His tour is heading towards the West Coast this week, promoting his latest novel.

The student body was informed of the public reading only the previous day, in an e-mail from Dean of Students John Becker, who requested that for security reasons only the local community be told of the event. Rushdie spent most of the hour reading from his newest novel, while sitting on stage with President Boasen, and answered questions from the student audience for the remaining time. The excerpt he read introduced the main characters: an Indian rock star and a photojournalist who becomes obsessed with her.

“I was delighted he chose to launch his book at Bard,” remarked President Boasen about the event. “It was a pleasure to have him on campus. I’m very proud of the quality of the questions asked by the students. I think he was very impressed as well.”

The discussion sparked by the questions varied from the significance of the Orpheus myth in his latest fiction, to his relationships with celebrities such as Madonna and U2. Very little of the discussion focused on the death decree that has so shaped his life in recent years.

While introducing Rushdie, President Boasen mentioned his invitation to the author to speak at Bard. When asked what he thought of the likelihood that Rushdie would accept the offer, President Boasen replied, “I think we have a good chance of getting him. He’s very well disposed to the college. He has a great affection for Bard.”

After the hour-long reading, Rushdie spoke as a guest in Professor Brad Morrow’s “Contemporary Innovative Fiction” class. The discussion allowed students the chance to pose direct questions to the author about the process of writing his novel and the stylistic mechanisms at work. The class was provided with advanced copies of the book, which was released in stores the next day. The class of 20 students included five photographers whose inquisitive flashbulbs punctuated the discussion.

Despite Dean Becker’s notice, a press conference took place at Bard Campus the Sunday before the public reading. A score of photographers and journalists were present as the reading on Monday afternoon.

Rushdie has lived and traveled in secret since 1989 when the Shiite Muslim government of Iran issued its now famous death decree, for what it interpreted as blasphemy in his fifth novel, ‘The Satanic Verses.’ Though the now more moderate leadership of the Iranian government officially distanced itself from the fatwa last September, many conservative Muslims believe it is too problematic, including one Iranian foundation that has issued a $3.2 million bounty on the author.

Bard-Backed Charter School Proposed

New York Charter School Act allows for development of community-run institutions

New Smolny Blazes Path

The college, modeled after Bard, champions progressive education

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B A C K P A G E
Coffee Shop Opens

New campus center café opens to limited enthusiasm

BY LAUREN NELSON

Look quizzically upon the grill at the campus center’s new coffee shop; the fact that it had to be “specially ordered” helped push back the opening of the café several weeks. Other missing equipment and insufficient power lines contributed to the delay as well.

In a recent interview, Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration Jim Brudvig assured The Observer that the delay was worth it, as he has relabeled the “Potato” sandwiches that are featured on the menu—sandwiches that could not be made on the former grill. Made with “special” bread supplied by Bread Alone in Rhinebeck, these sandwiches are “packed” with a choice of grilled vegetables and are an obsession of Brudvig, who mentioned them four times in a 15-minute interview.

If you don’t remember helping to design the menu, it’s not because you missed some kind of questionnaire—it is because you didn’t join the committee of students, faculty and administrators that helped plan the new coffee shop. Since it happened two years ago, many of those gastronomy-and-typergasm students have graduated, and the rest of us are left with their choices.

The feeling around campus however, suggests that not too many students are enthused about the new menu. Many are too busy lamenting the loss of the old space.

“The old deKline was better. The campus center just doesn’t have the same atmosphere,” says Jessica Pavone who works directly outside the café at the “information” desk. “It has a different quality, like it belongs more to the administration than to the students.”

Many students share Pavone’s worries about the new space. If you think the only difference in the coffee shops is the clean, new carpeting, think again. Even the old name will not carry over. “deKline” referred not to the space next to Eline Commons, but was part of the deKline club that was started by students in 1992, back when there was no place to hang out in the evenings or hold an informal performance. A group of students has formed to keep the “spirit” of the old deKline alive, fearing the new coffee shop will fail to capture that esprit de corps.

The group is in the process of renovating the basement of the old gym with money out of the convention fund. According to David Janis, who is involved in the process, the space will open shortly and will be a place for students to hang out, drink coffee or repress, and are hopefully highly performant.

The old deKline will see such student performances no longer. And if you’re thinking of simply soilling and hanging out in the old space it could prove to be a bit uncomfortable, as the old deKline will be used as a faculty lounge. Unlike the famous deKline committee, this was decided safely by the administration, according to Brudvig. Luckily, the administration has no plans for usurping the basement of the Old Gym from student control and Brudvig himself heartily approves. He sees it as “a good space to stay dedicated to student services, club activities and parties.”

Charter School Proposed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

outline an educational plan and will describe an intended curricu-

lum and organizational structure for the school. In order to receive

The charter application must demonstrate a strong

organizational framework, as well as show that the planned school

will be diverse and innovative, and will fulfill a present community

need.

The local charter group has met regularly for the last few months

on Bard campus, and has grown to include between 70 and 80 indi-

viduals from the local area, including Bard Professor Daniel

Berthold-Bond and Chris Lindner. Though most participants are

from Red Hook and Rhinebeck, the Hyde Park, Poughkeepsie,

Germantown, Kingston, and Poughkeepsie districts are also re-

presented in the group.

The group has recently drafted a mission statement stating the

values, goals, curriculum focus, and educational approach of the

proposed school. The mission statement describes a plan for an in-

tegrative and participatory curriculum that will heavily emphasize

a creative approach to learning and that would be supported by the

involvement of families and groups in the local community.

Professor Lindner mentioned the excitement he shares with so many

in the group currently involved in the planning of the intermedi-

ate curriculum for the school.

As well as crafting their mission statement, the charter project

group has formalized their community structure, and is working to

increase awareness and support from communities in the area. Their

Outreach Committee, in fact, aims to make this very good possible.

Organizer Susan Hinkle (who was head of the Packer Collegiate

Institute in New York City for many years) insists that a major goal

of the project is to establish strong connections with families and

community groups at this stage in development.

An important part of the mission and spirit of the project, accord-

ing to Hinkle, is the development of positive, cooperative relation-

ships with local school boards. The charter project aims to augment

and enhance the primary and secondary education available to all chil-

dren in the local area, as well as to fill the present need, and so hopes

its involvement with district schools will be mutually beneficial.

The challenge facing the process is that local districts will lose

funding from the state for each student that attends a new charter

school, rather than the district’s school. Despite this fact, Deb

Newport, chair of the Outreach Committee, reported that recent

meetings with local district superintendents have allowed a friendly

and positive exchange of concerns and ideas about a possible new

school to go on.

Another important challenge that faces the group is the building

of financial support necessary to begin such an institution. The

group will meet with the President on April 28 to present their

work to date, including their new mission statements, and discuss possibil-

ities like Bard financial support for the school.

The group has until October 1 of this year to submit their appli-

cation and secure approval to the state. If the application is approved

and charter is granted, the organizers can begin immediately to

secure or build facilities, hire all staff, and instate their organization-

al structure. The school would be able to open in the fall of 2000,

but could take another year if necessary, before admitting students

of grades K through 12.

In the meanwhile, Susan Hinkle hopes that students and faculty

will actively participate in the planning of the school, as well as its

realization. For her, as for so many involved, cross-generational com-

munity involvement in the charter school would represent a fulfill-

ment of its mission to draw the community closer together.

NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF NEWSBRIEF

The Observeur, Friday, April 16, in Fort Tryon Park near the admission of police, the mission failed to take

enough. On Saturday night the man was seen on the street and

the man cut himself. The man was found in the same jacket

and was taken to the hospital. The man was found

the right side of the path. He was wearing a white shirt

and blue jeans. The man was seen

in Fort Tryon Park near the

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Pemstein Ready to Rock
Since December, new VP of development/alumni affairs
has brought big-city expertise to Bard's fundraising program

By Peter Morinich

Late last year Susan Gillespie left the position of Vice President of Development and Public Affairs. She did not leave Bard, but went on to become the dean of the Institute of International Liberal Education. However, her old office on the third floor of Ludlow remained empty until December, when Bard hired Debra Pemstein. When Pemstein arrived, the name of the position changed to the Vice President of Development and Alumni/Affairs.

Pemstein is a powerhouse in the world of raising money for the arts. She graduated from George Washington University with Honors, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration. Since then, Pemstein has worked in raise cash for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and the New York City Ballet.

Someone at Bard knew of Pemstein's reputation, and when the Development position opened, that person recommended her. When I asked her who this person was, Pemstein laughed, and said "I never found out that, actually." At any rate, Pemstein took the position here at Bard and the surrounding area. Not only that, but her family felt that it was time for a change. Previously, Pemstein, her husband (a painter), and her two young daughters, were living in New York City.

Being the Vice President of Development and Alumni/ Affairs involves what fund raising people call "cultivating and soliciting." That is, Pemstein spends her time cultivating good relationships with potential donors, and then soliciting them for money. Back in '96-'97, Bard raised $8.7 million in Gifts and Donations. The figure remains around $9 million every year, and it is Pemstein's job to keep it there.

Pemstein does not do this all by herself. She heads up the Development Staff, which consists of 12 people including herself. She also works closely with the Board of Trustees. Boardmembers are mostly Bard alumni/ae, who often donate money themselves. Sometimes Boardmembers will solicit potential donors directly on Pemstein's behalf.

Pemstein, along with the Development Staff, is in charge of a number of different giving campaigns, including a phone-a-thon, wherein Bard calls up those people who have given in the past. (Incidentally, anyone who thinks that they have the courage and tact to solicit by phone can help with the phone-a-thon. Pemstein's can be reached at 74505.)

Bard recently finished the Bard College Campaign, which raised $90 million so that Bard could have an endowment. In the past, Bard required 90 million dollars in Gifts and Donations every year to balance the budget. Now, the school can rely, at least partially, on the investment interest from the $90 million. Every year, this money can go toward expenses, or possibly new scholarships.

Increasing the Endowment is part of Pemstein's job. By soliciting the various sources who gave to the Bard College Campaign, Bard set a precedent. Because they gave something, they are part of the community. After someone gives money to Bard, Pemstein explained, we always send them a thank you letter, telling them exactly where their money went, and then we ask them again. And if that works? "Then we send them a letter to thank them, and we're on again."
Norman Manea and the triumph of the Artist

By Cezar Ganea

NORMAN MANEA WAS BORN IN 1936 IN Suceava, Romania. At the age of five he was deported to the concentration camp Tarnopol, in the Ukraine. After WW II, he returned to Romania, and survived the next four decades under the totalitarian dictatorship of the Communist regime, which was not overthrown until the violent revolution of 1989. By then, he had emigrated to America, and taken up residency at Bard College.

Through the course of his life, Norman Manea has written novels, collections of essays, and volumes of short fiction; and his writing has been translated into many languages. His work is known for describing life in concentration camps, within totalitarian social orders, and in exile. His many honors and awards include the MacArthur Foundation and Guggenheim Fellowships, the Writer's Union of the Socialist Republic of Romania Award (which was withdrawn on demand of the communist authorities), and the National Jewish Book Award for On Cloven: The Dictator and the Artist, a collection of essays.

On Cloven includes an essay by Mr. Manea entitled "The History of an Interview," which explains the circumstances leading to his censorship by the Communist government. In 1981, Mr. Manea participated in an interview in which he gave guarded, yet honest answers about the regime. Among other things, his views on the place of the artist, and his or her work, in society. The interview was ultimately published as great risk to all. The result was a scandal in which the powers in control of the Romanian literary scene were attempted to disrupt and silence Mr. Manea, precipitating his eventual emigration to the West, in 1987.

In this candid interview, Norman Manea discusses his experience as a dissident writer, an exile, and an immigrant, as well as the obvious challenges of the writer who must adapt to a new home. It is currently Francis Bacon Professor of European Studies and Culture, as well as Writer in Residence, at Bard.

Question: In the interview that is the subject of the last of your essays in On Cloven, the first question of the interviewee is, in part, "To what extent do you consider a writer to represent himself, and to what extent is he a public person? Might there exist a conflict of interests here?" Your response concludes with the statement, "Any writer worthy of his serious mission would struggle to overcome this impasse, if it indeed exists, between solitude and solidarity."

I would like to ask you to comment on that response. What would your answer be now, all these years later, having left the totalitarian regime you were in when you gave that answer. Would it be different, and if so, how?

Norman Manea: The situation changed there, and my situation changed, but the answer would be the same as seventeen years ago. In order to express public opinion, the first condition is to have a public opinion. There was a real possibility of talking more than I said, because the reader understood between the lines what I meant. . . it wasn't really possible to have a public opinion. This interview was published with great difficulties and proved a huge scandal, despite the fact that if you read it now, in a normal situation, nothing seems so explosive or extraordinary. In that time and place normality was explosive. The simple fact of being in the normal, the simple fact of saying normal things, not to use the so-called "party" language, was already a challenge, a kind of "golden bench."

Between the writer and the reader there was an invisible code, a special connection indeed, but I will not praise too much censorship. As you probably know, I quote from a point saying that censorship is the mother of metaphor. We should prefer to invent metaphors without censorship, not to be forced to praise too many achievements due to and through oppression.

So, I think the answer is the same. Of course in an open society the public opinion may also be manipulated. Through the mass media, through commercial trivialization. But the risk is smaller. The big surprise here is that there are not too many people ready to take this risk, to fight it, even if the risk is not so great. You will not be put in jail. Maybe you will upset your boss, maybe you will even lose your job . . . yet people are not very ready to do it.

It is in some way understandable. This is a society where the focus is on the individual and on the individuality. I said there about the writer who tries to overcome the contradiction between solitude and solidarity is in a way valuable also for another type of society. There, we had an extreme situation. And yet, also in a free society based on competition, it's difficult to overcome this contradiction. You follow up your own interest first of all, and then what remains for solidarity is a question we ask ourselves. Sometimes it is easier to throw a kind of solidarity for the people of Kosovo, than to show solidarity with a colleague with whom you are in competition. I'm sure even students experience this, despite that they are not yet in the social competition which involves earning money and having a better position. It is felt in any social group, it is the engine of the capitalist society and it is not easy probably to overcome this contradiction . . .

If we translate these two terms for a broader category of population, the common traditions, between solitude and solidarity becomes the contradiction between self-interest and the common interest. Regard a work art? The criteria for evaluating art are different, more fluid and complicated, of course. The "competition" became, unfortunately also in this area, more and more a commercial competition, distorting the essential way at deals with solitude and solidarity.

Q: What most compelled you to write when you began writing in Romania? Do you believe there is a particular thing, within a dictatorial regime, that motivates a 'true' artist?

A: Under solitude, under dissatisfaction with trivial daily life, we face an inner, deep need for something different, higher. In a closed society the possibilities of expressing this need were drastically reduced. In many cases people there became readers, and very faithful, sophisticated readers, due to the fact that they didn't have a big choice. How to avoid or overcome the banality and/or dartsiness of daily life? It was a way of finding a dialogue with unknown, intelli- gence, invisible friends. It was very important, and it was also a way of keeping your privacy. To lock yourself in a room with a book pro- tected you in a way from the outside world. I think it protects you even here, yet there is protected you from a lot of dangers and risks.

A list of things I must say which happened there, happen here also, but in a different way, in a milder way. The tragedy has become here switched mainly to conspiracy, to conspiracy, not so dangerous, not so dangerous. There, the fact that it was a large readership for books, a growing one, had also a social-political explanation. And we are sure, after things changed, that also the readership changed. So it's not the differ- ence between a newborn American and a newborn Romanian. It's about society . . . and the relation between individ- ual and their social environment.

Q: What was your education like in literature during Romania's totalitarian regime? Did you depend on a black market in books?

A: I graduated as an engineer in hydraulics and I worked as an engineer for more than ten years. But I was, from my childhood, a very avid reader, and even started to write very early. The reason why I studied engineering was quite compelled, related to the sociopolitical pressure and distractions. In fact, I was in love with liter- ature. You may remember what Kafka said when he chose to be a lawyer. It wasn't affinity for his profession, it was, rather, the hope that it would protect his indifference. He said, I'm indifferent to anything which is not writing." Which means literature, of course . . . And he added, "I must find a profession which allows me this indifference, without hurting too much my vanity."

When I graduated from high school it was still a kind of Stalinist...
or post-Stalinist period when literature was very propagandistic. I am a self-made man of letters through my reading and my writing. During the ten years after the war (I mean my high school period), which politically was very tense, I took advantage of reading the great Russian literature. It was a period when the Russian literature was heavily and very well translated into Romanian. So even in that tough and crazy period you could find some very good books, and I mean not only good Russian literature... I followed up to the western classic literature and the Romanian one of course. When I was already an employer, there was a cultural opening in Romania, a lot of modern literature came in, and I followed up again.

From time to time, through friends, to connections in the West, I also received modern and contemporary books that were never translated and brought into Romania, smuggled in by different underground channels. More or less I was in touch with the evolution of western literature, and also the American one. It wasn't like here: you go in a library... you go in a book store and you buy whatever you want or you order and then finally you have the book about which you heard or you were told. It was an effort for every book, to have it, to read it, a great excitement and risk to read something which is forbidden.

It was not through the black market. It was only through friends, a changed, a kind of underground channel, but not for money. A kind of cultural conspiracy.

I remember my first visit to Paris in the late seventies. I assured that huge FNAC bookstore, and... and I almost fainted there. Going from one shelf to another and trying to make a list and to see what I can select. I wanted to buy everything. I had money maybe for three books. How to choose these books from the thirty; at least, which were on the first line of my preference? We were really avid, hungry, curious to know. It was heaven, in a way, and quite rewarding, despite the risk and the tension, quite rewarding to remain culturally alive.

Q4: What was the experience of emigration to America like for you?

One is reminded of Candace Miller's book, The Captive Mind, in which he discusses the experience of being a disinterested writer and mentions the feeling of loss for the exile who cannot contribute to the literary consciousness of his people by writing in his nation. Was there a similar feeling on your part about emigration?

Q5: It's not easy for anybody to uproot himself, from a culture, from a family, from memory and the past. It is much more difficult for a writer. The language grows in a writer from the moment when he has a sort of a connection to a reader, until he hears his own voice in his own language... To lose this suddenly is a disaster. The Romanian writer Crimean said in 1930: a writer to write in languages is a disaster greater than any other historical disaster in the world. And it happens paradoxically in the moment that you are free—because exile is also, as it was in our cases, freedom. It means leaving a closed prison type of society and penal colony, reaching finally a state of freedom. Yet in the same moment, the tongue was cut; I mean, exactly in the moment you had to say about your experience.

The language grows in a writer from the moment when he as a young person becomes a reader, until he hears his own voice in his own language... To lose this suddenly is a disaster.

Q6: How does the current state of things in Romania, considering both the sociopolitical changes that have taken place since the revolution and the struggle to reestablish a state in as a new republic, affect your sense of identity as a Romanian writer?

Q7: Despite the fact that Romania changed the political system through a violent fight—the only country in eastern Europe that did it this way, because it was the toughest dictatorship in the sense—despite this fact, which had a heroic side, I must say that in this change a lot of force and manipulations was going on. Partially, the change was directed by the secret police which succeeded for a while (and I'm not sure about today) to be behind the scene, to manipulate the political scene even after the change. A lot of old neomarxist (privileged) people and people involved with the secret police became after the change very rich, and gained a kind of freedom and power which they did not have even with the communism. Serving the communist system assured you some privileges but you were still under control all the time. Having money you are not any more under any control. This is absolute power. The situation is boiling still there. A lot of corruption and lies and manipulating is going on. The normal people, the working population, has a very difficult time. Capitalism entered there with a very tough horror face. It's difficult to predict anything. It's a chaotic type of situation, which can grow (step by step, I mean, not by force) to a middle type of democracy, or to a new type of authoritarianism system. Not necessarily the old one— I don't believe that it can be exactly the same as it was, it cannot be—but it can be despotism. The place has a Byzantine tradition... and these 50 years of communism really did a lot harm to the core of the Romanian civilization itself. It's difficult to recover. A lot depends on the West. The West is, as we know, very busy, as it has it's own problems. Capitalism itself is going through a new phase, even a crisis, and there is a lot of questions about the future of global capitalism. Usually the West illustrates in the East only when something approaches, not before. And this is much always late.

My relationship to the country is still not the best. I criticized the old and new post-communist nationalism in Romania. Coming from the famous exile in America, this criticism was not taken in the best way. I will still have a complicated relationship with the place. I have friends there of course, and I have people with whom I have an interfering dialogue. Yet the connection to the country is still tense. I am more and more here than there.

Q8: How do you view your place here in America? Do you consider yourself a Romanian-American? How do you characterize yourself in the political, academic, or literary world you are now in?

Q9: Well, I live here. I own an apartment here. I have a job here. I have students here. I publish my books here. I have plants for the future here. It is more and more my place. Of course I will have the translation problems, or other very specific problems related to my writing. As for a citizen, if this is what you ask me, I am more and more here. It will never pretend to be the typical American, I am not even convinced that America needs typical Americans. I think my work here can contribute to the spiritual climate of the country. I watch carefully and with great interest what happens. I think the country goes through a political and moral crisis. It is a big and strong country. It's still an immense human laboratory. I don't want to believe that something wondrous will not happen to establish this great democracy as a leading spiritual force of our troubled world.

I am quite often disturbed by the huge contrast between the wealthy and the poor, about health insurance, for instance, for the wealthy and the poor. About the modern trade of cultural values, the overwhelming trivialization of political and cultural life, the cynical invasion of privacy. I am quite uncomfortable with the system of election, which is in the end the expression of a real democracy. Do you need to be a very wealthy man in order to be a new candidate in an election? To express the will of the people? Success, which is at the core of the American civilization is usually and unfortunately measured first of all financially. Yet a lot of men and women that succeeded monstrously in their human enterprises and intellectual adventure and yet were poor, or even died poor or unknown. From the human and sociopolitical view of the sanity of the society, I think that this brutal emphasis on money is not the best simplification of life.

There are of course many, many other things which disturb me, and a lot of other things which I like. I'm still amazed by the extraordinary energy of this country, even if not always going in the right direction. Optimism, creativity, energy, liberty, charity, inventiveness, resilience... I do hope that as some point in the future I will be able to write about my American experience. I don't dare to say about the American side of my personality. I'm not yet sure about that, although it is already a part of my life. And I hope that the view of the newcomer, who is not even new, can bring something fresh and interesting to the vision of the country. I'm glad that it happened so that I landed at Bard. I'm here already ten years. It became certainly my real American home... I have been noticing that it keeps being more for me a familiar, even a family—new, American family—environment.
CCS Spring Shows
Present Diverse Works
Graduate students bring year-long creative process to end

BY KERRY CHANCE

As part of the Spring Thesis Series, the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS) featured three experimentally distinctive exhibitions: “Fluid,” “Sound Foundations,” and “Variations on Themes: Selections from the Marlofort Henne Collection.” These exhibitions, curated by graduate students Henry Estrada, Benjamin Portis, and museum director Ananda Cruz, respectively, ran through March 28.

The thesis exhibitions were the culmination of a year-long process in which graduate students developed a theme, chose artists, and used their professional skills to illustrate the integration of concept and artwork.

Fluid, Sound, Foundations

For his Master’s thesis, Portis presented recent videos that focus on the immersion of sound as an integral but often overlooked part of video art. The six artists featured—Jessica Bronson, Amy Jenkins, Christian Marclay, Daniel Pillman, Alyson Shore, and “Screen” (Willy Le Maître and Eric Rosenzweig)—explored new approaches to the medium in the technical and formalistic realm. Recent advances in computer technology have allowed for the synchronization of sound and video.

This technology was used in “Filteration,” by Screen, which depicts the regeneration process of the deterioration of daily life: a crumpled paper moved in unison with the tempo of the soundtrack.

These artists also broke away from the former tradition in video art which, like television and movies, demanded a narrative form. Alyson Shore’s video evoked such a demand as it depicted a female figure in a mirrored costume almost merging with the wooded background and moving to a soundtrack of underwater recordings. This piece, like the others in “Sound Foundations,” was repetitive and cyclical, allowing for the possibility of multiple interpretations depending on length of viewing or position in the room. Aside from varying perspectives, Shore said she intended to convey “the border between humans and nature but also the continuity that is seen when the mirrors dissolve into nature, but never do fully.”

While nature sounds accompanied several of the pieces the music of popular culture and machine were also included. With all these different sounds and images in his show, Portis explained that he “had to make the [exhibition] more than a sum of its parts.” In doing so, he brings “the more subtle aspect of the act: sound” to the fore.

Fluid Exhibition

In this exhibit, Estrada explored the three ways in which sculptor Thomas Glannford, painters Paul Henry Ramirez and conceptual artist Eitel Shipton, challenged the standards of their mediums by treating each piece as a fluid or “open-ended proposition.” All three utilized site-specific installations and used mixed-media to evoke passage and transformation in ambiguous, playful, and even exotic ways.

Moving between pieces, the work of each artist often overlapped and moved toward the work of the next so that the concept of fluidity was contained not only in the pieces themselves but also throughout the exhibition. A new work by Eitel Shipton, entitled “Yessus, Let’s Go,” was comprised of a large metal rope that ascended to the ceiling from a horse on the floor in front of a stenciled backdrop, suggesting passage itself. It also provided a continuity between the pieces.

The pieces were unified as well by the artists’ original shared cultural region, near the U.S.-Mexican border, and reflected what Estrada called, “a bicultural sensibility, negotiating, translating, and crossing borders.”

Even the canvas ,“borders” could not contain some of Ramirez’s work—his sinusoidal lines shaped and transformed the human figure and often “traded” off into architectural space. Despite the seemingly free form of Estrada’s exhibition, he explained that “in the field of contemporary art, a curator authors a concept that acts as a framework for new trends in art.”

Variations on Themes

Estrada’s exhibition, though not a part of the spring thesis series, drew from the sculptures in CCS’s permanent collection. These pieces balanced the more contemporary artists featured in the students’ exhibits and created a more linear, historical theme.

Using a minimalist starting point, she traced the evolution from the geometric forms of the circle and square of the 1960s and 70s to the human body that emerged primarily during the 80s. “There are links between themes” said Cruz, pointing to furniture like Jacki Winer’s blocky, granite “Pair of One Part Chairs,” and to the illusion of the body that appeared in Felix Gonzalez-Torres’s metaphoric candy spill. Because the show was arranged from pieces in storage, Cruz said that the exhibition simply required “a light curatorial touch.” She added, “I enjoy working with the artists because through them you can see and learn about different experiences.”

Through her careful planning by the curators, the show allowed the artists to contribute to a larger theme while well representing their own work.
Stanley Kubrick is Not Dead, He's Downloaded

By D.C. Cellke

TWO WEEKS AFTER completing the film Eyes Wide Shut, which will be released in July, Stanley Kubrick downloaded his consciousness into a mainframe somewhere to be resurrected at a later date. The official word was that he died in his sleep at his home in England. I’m not buying it. Knowing Kubrick’s career and maverick reputation as I do, it is impossible to accept that he merely “passed away.” I’d rather cling to the notion that his head is in a cryogenic tank next to Walt Disney’s, merely awaiting the time when A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) can be brought to the screen with the advanced technology of the twenty-first century. A.I. was Kubrick’s legendary project that consisted in filming a young actor literally growing up over twenty years. As the actor aged, Kubrick supposedly filmed key scenes for the film. It is also said that he was waiting for the technology of cinema to become advanced enough to do justice to the special-effects-heavy idea. Perhaps he finally realized that technology would never catch up with his “out of this world” images, at least in his lifetime. So it makes perfect sense for him to top his head off and put it into the freezer for a couple of centuries until the world is ready for his film. Better yet, I’d like to believe my mainframe theory. Kubrick has now been downloaded into a supercomputer and will continue to direct his films appearing to everyone as a blinking red light like HAL in Kubrick’s masterpiece 2001: “Drew, put the camera left,” he might say on his next film shoot.

Kubrick’s reputation as a recluse and extremeTaskmaster on his film shoots is the stuff of legend. From 1953 to 1999, Kubrick only made 13 films. They have become a literal bible of filmmaking for anyone who has ever wanted or dreamed of making their own films. He is without doubt the most influential and important filmmaker of the post-war generation. Not only for the films he made but in the way that he made them. His films have aroused controversy and have made taboo topics such as pedophilia, nuclear annihilation, rape and gang violence, the evil of technology, and the horrors of war, viable and entertaining subjects for the cinema.

Kubrick started as a Look magazine photographer when he was 17. He eventually shifted into motion pictures and garnered the attention of the public with his third feature, The Killing (1956). This lead to the anti-war picture Paths of Glory (1957), which starred Kirk Douglas. In 1960 Douglas hired Kubrick to replace director Anthony Mann on Douglas’ gladiator epic Spartacus. Douglas assumed the still-movie director would be overwhelmed by the scope of the picture and would be traceable. This was far from the case. Kubrick and Douglas batted for creative control for the rest of the shoot. This was Douglas’ baby, but Kubrick was not used to being a “yes man.” Spartacus is the story of slave leading a revolt against the Roman Empire. The behind-the-scenes fights became so intense that Kubrick once quipped to Douglas, “What the hell does this movie want?” or something to that effect. After this experience, Kubrick fled to England where he lived and worked for the rest of his life. He vowed to always have authority over his own sets.

Kubrick was an innovator. He shot Barry Lyndon (1975) completely by natural and candlelight using a special lens that was originally created by NASA. He was instrumental in developing the Steadicam, which his film The Shining (1980) was the first to use. His film 2001 (1969) raised the level of special effects in film by leaps and bounds, making films such as Star Wars possible. His most controversial film A Clockwork Orange (1971) caused riots in London and had to be pulled from theaters. It is to this day banned in England.

It is said that Kubrick lived like a hermit. Supposedly he didn’t socialize. He never flew. He never gave interviews. However, Kubrick had a pilot’s license, loved baseball, had many friends in and out of the film industry, and raised a family. Last year he accepted a lifetime achievement award from the DGA. He did not appear at the ceremony, but instead sent a video tape of his acceptance speech. I think that sums up Kubrick perfectly. He was not nearly as secretive as people would have us believe, but he was not the “publicity hound” that many celebrities are, either. To Hollywood this made him seem strange. But we loved him for that. The stories of forcing actors to do take after take of a scene, his productions always being shrouded in complete secrecy, his ability to replace actors and re-shoot all of their scenes, are what make him the idol of nearly every young filmmaker today.

The stories of forcing actors to do take after take of a scene, his productions always being shrouded in complete secrecy, his ability to replace actors and re-shoot all of their scenes, are what make him the idol of nearly every young filmmaker today. By average standards he acted like a nut, but who in the hell likes average. His last completed film, Eyes Wide Shut, took over two years to make. Kubrick replaced two cast members and re-shot all of those scenes, and wound up costing Warner Bros. in excess of $55 million dollars before the film was finished. And no one at the studio ever got to see it until Kubrick was done. That’s power. That’s madness. It’s pure Kubrick.

I just hope the truth is revealed in my lifetime, the truth that Stanley Kubrick is not dead. He’s just out there somewhere waiting for a new society to emerge so he can push their limits as well.
FOOD REVIEW

For me, the name Sufle 2000 conjures up images of greatness. Having that name alone makes me enter a drama state, one where I picture a restaurant the size of a warehouse, with a Mid-West style arrangement of hundreds of booths of all different varieties. There would be a pasta bar, a pizza buffet, assorted fried foods, and so on, as far as the eye could see.

To me, however, Sufle 2000 is quite different. First of all, it must be said that this restaurant is not so close to the city, especially if you get directions from the Internet. For those of you who have never been there, I’ll tell you how we got there. We used the bus service from the station where the bus service is almost nonexistent. Then we walked to the Sufle 2000 building, which turned out to be not much more than a broken down vehicle at the parking lot.

The building itself is quite different. It has large windows, a large sign, and a really great view of the city. This makes you look at the city.

But this is not a review of Sufle 2000. I must refer to Sufle 2000. First of all, the outside of Sufle 2000 looks a bit too much like a bank, with its metallic lettering and marble finish. The inside is even worse. As far as I know, there are no windows in the restaurant, only one that features Chinese food. I really appreciated certain parts of the decor, such as the indirect blue lighting and surrounding mural designs creating that underwater feel.

The buffet was not good in the way it did not go on forever. As is usually the case with me and buffets, I got really excited right away, planning in my mind an 8-course meal. Each dish looked better than the next, and they had sheep and crab legs, grilled all-you-can-eat stir-fries. Various soups and salads added to the plate as did the chow mein on the table, the delicious barbecued ribs, egg rolls, and the great sauce section with a must-have dumpling sauce, which consists of everything. I piled my plate up, trying to remain myself, not forgetting the ice cream bar for dessert.

When I got back to my table, I noticed every time, until I realized that perhaps I didn’t come at the best time of day. I think to really appreciate Sufle 2000 one should go for a breakfast or brunch, enjoying the food when it is fresh and still hot, eating the subdued but filling. Yes, to start out early in the day would be the best. Since it is all you can eat, you could always start breakfast and just hang around for lunch, maybe taking a break in the middle by taking in the bathroom to gather your appetite again for dinner.

But, because I did not go there during dinner, items were brought away. Feeling the pressure, I ran up and prepared a second plate, trying to get all the items I wanted in the first round. This proved fruitful as well. As with buffets, it is so tempting to make a mountainside plate but then you return to your seat, take a small bite of everything, feel a little guilty from the various caloric values you ate, and by the time you are finished, you are on the verge of a little wound, meaning you are going to pay $15.00 but afterwards, it becomes impossible to the another piece of food and to inky your third was not enough. A bit, it is the dou-

Creating A New World With Universal Power

A tropse of performers takes on social issues with theatre

By Stephanie Schneider

Four elements of hip-hop, we be the fifth,” exclaimed the four performers who made up the Universes, as an introduction of themselves and their performance.

The Universes, a group that embraces the elements of hip-hop along with theatre, creates a performance that is unique. Made up of three men and one woman, two of whom are Bard alumni, the Universes shared their talents with Bard Students on Friday, April 10 in Bard Hall.

The beginning of the performance started a promise that this would be a show of creativity and boundless expression. The show started off with the members in the back of the room making varied sounds of warm-up singing exercises. Each performer took an individual sound and when they reached the front of the room, congealed into a unified group.

This example threaded itself throughout the whole performance, that is four individuals acting separately themselves and coming together again and again. The performance consisted of small individual monologues intermitted by unified group-oriented bits. This perhaps was the most impressive aspect of the performance: each member branched off into separate characters but then managed to return to the whole.

The individual performances concerned drug addiction, police brutality, living in housing projects, feelings of worthlessness, loneliness, and struggle. The audience witnessed the drug addict “inhale aspirin and subdue reality,” as he questioned sanity and insanity and how the borders blue. The female performer sang with expressiveness in Spanish about the tragedy of her “Solobé” and when she finished, joked, “I can sing it in Chinese, too.” The “sarinist” who kills with words questioned, “OJ is free—but is Mumia?”

These are some of the social issues addressed by a group that encourages their audience to take an active stance; a new stance with a new energy. One performer said, for example, that he didn’t want to hear anymore about the phrase “revolution will not be televised.” Instead, he encouraged, “Take a pen, erase the ‘R’ in revolution, let it be evolution, and bring it live.”

The Universes stem from a greater organization known as The Point. The Point’s home base is located in the South Bronx, in a 12,000 foot building along with a court yard; the facility was renovated with the help of fundraising campaigns, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Booth Fissia Fund.

“When all was said and done, the Point’s total expense for architectural services rendered was $1 and a lifetime of gratitude,” read their web site at the point.org.

The Point is a community-based organization that offers a variety of resources, including an institute of photography. As one performer said, it is “a diamond in the rough.”

Two of the Universes, the founders of The Point (both Bard graduates), Mildred Ruiz and Steven Sapp, urged Bard students in the audience to take advantage of resources of Bard. Sapp studied Drama and later worked for Admissions in 1990 to 1992. He has continued his interest in theatre by writing, directing and choreographing six theatrical productions, including the critically acclaimed “Purgatory and Another Des Slowly.”

Mildred Ruiz majored in Language and Literature during her time at Bard and later worked at the Deveraux Foundation, which is a residence home for emotionally disturbed males from ages 14-21 in Red Hook. She actively works in her community by organizing ethnic festivals and cultural heritage presentations.

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THE BARD OBSERVER ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1999
Two Bardians Explore Life in "Hell's Kitchen"

Siblings Samir and Marias Vural produce drama in NY

By Music Vendor

Images capture us. Poetry enchants us. Social issues displace and confront us with the distance between our lives and the reality of the world at our periphery.

"Hell's Kitchen" accomplished all of this. The two stories I experimented "Hell's Kitchen," at Bard in the fall, and a month ago at its NYC debut at the Curtain at Union. Settlement on Eldridge Street, was of special significance to me. This is not only because its creators, Marias and Samir Vural, have attended Bard, but also because I have been blessed to witness the sincerity and strength with which they, as a family, confront the struggles of their lives. The multimedia dimensions of the "Hell's Kitchen" performance are tied together by this integrity, showing in microcosm the victory of the human spirit over the multiple social challenges that accompany a rapidly developing world.

In "Hell's Kitchen," current Bard student Marias Vural portrays all eight of the characters, drawn from figures and social issues surrounding her and her brother Samir's youth in the Midtown Hell's Kitchen area of New York City. The dialogue between these voices is achieved through the budding production and directing genius of Samir, a Bard film graduate of '98. Through a combination of video projection and interactive live performance, the impeccably timed show rotates through a conversation between Marias, live as Esperanza, the spiritual mother of the show, and Maria on video as Paulie, a slyly-something, outspoken Italian Teetotum. Esperanza exults, and the video cuts between Paulie organizing over the phone, and Abdul Abdulla preparing water and chips in the back of the restaurant in which "Hell's Kitchen" is set. Abdulla disappears from the video display and a moment later is live onstage to deliver snacks to the audience, which is served at cafe tables incorporated into the performance space. All of "Hell's Kitchen" works with this smooth transition between characters and settings. Images of NYC life serve blended with stories of Vural's characters going about their business on the screen, leading to the authenticity of the production.

Inseparable cousins and the red noses "Hell's Kitchen" sign allusion the characters as they reveal their personal struggles with the changing neighborhood, and their unique strengths and pains in dealing with it. Zarathushtra, the security guard, blames dropout youth for ruining the neighborhood, predicting "we will burn if we don't learn." Paulie recalls the once paradisiacal community of Hell's Kitchen, naming the "idiot box" for the demise of the Unions, while Irene, with "lungs full of charcoal but a heart full of lemon-olopole" laments the assimilation by Starbuck's and McDonald's. Maggie, an African-American bag-lady teases the audience, crying on the some shoulders, shouting defensively at others, building to the emotional spot of the performance when she screams that God "took. He took, He told"—Esperanza explains behind her that she has lost two children to AIDS.

However memorable the issues dealt with in "Hell's Kitchen," its commentary avoids alienating the viewer by remaining wedded to the particulars of life. Thus when Marias enters playing herself, down from Bard for a visit, her complaints about Bard food and how it's "hard to keep focused up there" strike home, especially for the seven or eight Bard students in the audience. But when the long-sought-after Callum finally arrives to take the audience's orders, we discover that her rush masks the more serious sense in which she is late—she is pregnant again. "Hell's Kitchen babies livin' babies" becomes a mantra for lunatics; "walkin' west without even sniff it Hudson River sunset..." We're just Hell's Kitchen babies livin' babies—that's what we've supposed to do.

The triumph of "Hell's Kitchen" lies not in its artistic presentation of so many troubled voices, however, but in the ways they rise above fear, individually and together, to claim hope, peace, and purpose amidst the confusing paths of everyday life. To Abdul Abdulla, cleaning the floor is "sweeping away the deceptiveness" of the neighborhood. And Esperanza, in advice that also helps us take in the performance in its full complexity, sums up to "Listen to the voices that keep you searching, that help you, your question what's around you. That's how you find the soul."

The multiple talents of the Vurals are showcased beautifully in "Hell's Kitchen," and it is well that they should find at home there. The visual and verbal poetry of Samir, the abundant personality of Marias, and the vibrance of both was nourished by their mother and grandfather—and the other people whom they thanked after the show—in Hell's Kitchen, NYC. In "Hell's Kitchen," then, we see a tribute performed to those who shaped them, a willingness and ability to enter social problems head-on, and a demonstrated commitment to the acts they call home, acted out in hope and not fear. What we can learn from "Hell's Kitchen" is mainly what we can give it.
Searching for G-Spots and Good Men at Bard

While I care for you and all your problems deeply, I must confess part of the joy I receive from writing this column is that it allows me to rant to my heart’s content. I will spare you the (gory) details, but certain events have arisen which have caused me to continuously ponder the question: are there any “good men”? While this is partially spurred by the forthcoming letter I received, my recent conversations with women have led me to believe that perhaps only I know all “good men” because these women seem to have very little faith in the male gender. I tend to give them the benefit of the doubt, and I will say that I believe I consort with a good many upstanding young gentlemen on a regular basis. Yet I have ceased to be amazed by the number of women who are just plain fed up with them. I know what you thinking: “Oh, please, like I haven’t heard this bitch foot before, tell me something I don’t know.” Well, grin and bear it, baby, cause I’m going to ride this until the saddle breaks. Here’s what I wear: feedback. Men, defend yourself, write and tell me why I shouldn’t condemn you. Women, write and tell me why we can’t just let them go. Or for pete’s sake just help me figure out what a “good man” is, ’cause I’m damned if I know.

Dear Miss Lonelyhearts,

I always hear the women around campus talking about how there are no “good men” at Bard. I don’t have a girlfriend right now and from all the people you talk to I know you must have some idea of what they’re looking for in a man. How should I proceed from a positive first encounter, and what makes the perfect man? Yours,

Hungry for Love

Dear Hungry,

That’s a pretty tall order. You want me to tell you what makes the perfect man? Well, I can only tell you what I (and several of my intimate friends) think is perfect. I mean some people like Yanni—whatever floats your boat. So anyway, I’m not exactly sure what the perfect man is, but I have a pretty good idea of what an almost-but-not-quite-perfect man should be. I plan on pushing his buttons (see below) pretty soon. We’re talking about a “good man” here. So I guess we should figure out what constitutes a bad man. Unmum, let’s see. He doesn’t change his soda very often. Nah, we can let that slide. He wears said soda in bed. No problem. He inures. Buy some earplugs. He never listens. Talk louder. He still doesn’t listen. Get a dog. He doesn’t understand you. Teach the dog to translate. He makes you feel like his mother. Stop taking care of him. He doesn’t like you very much. You’ll grow on him. He hates your guts. He’s a bad man.

I don’t really know what to tell you with regards to what is perfect. I know that some people are just good people. Therefore, some men are good too (at that genius or what). If you respect someone and treat them well, then you should have no problem, however you can increase your “goodness” by mentioning how often you enjoy giving head. Still, without sounding too cliché, just be yourself. If you are a “good man” hopefully your desired women will be able to sense this. You see, women have this incredible radar sonar and, when they detect a “good man” it overload their system, and they find it impossible to talk to him. You may think that a girl is not interested when actually you’ve merely blown a few of her fuses, and all you have to do is wait for her to flip her switch. Unfortunately, this is also how girls act when they are not interested (i.e. "bad women") so you’ve kinda fucked either way.

In terms of where to go after a positive first encounter, I would suggest showering her with diamonds, rubies, pearls, and other such Extravagant gifts. No, I’m just kidding. Try calling her, or sit at her table in Klina. Whatever you do, don’t harass her. You are in the process of building a possible relationship, so start slowly, as this is a slow process. At this point you are merely aiming for building a sailboat, so don’t expect the Titanic (unless you are the spinning image of Leonardo, and even then, be prepared to spend a lot of time in the water).

Dear Miss Lonelyhearts,

I recently saw a Cosmo with the headline “Males G-Spot” on the cover. The article didn’t help me understand exactly how a guy or a girl should “push the button” - in fact it seems kind of dangerous. I need it in private and didn’t notice a big difference. Can you explain this mystery? How does this thing work? Signed,

Ready to push the button

Dear Ready,

Three words: practice makes perfect. I think your first mistake was trying to “push the button” in private. Get a little duo action going on. (I.e. I’ll push yours if you push mine).

The “Cosmo” article to which you are referring has grabbed the attention of many a man as he went through the check-out line while buying his twelve pack of Master Bait. Most of these men didn’t even know women, let alone men, have G-Spots. So, basically you are curious as to why you can’t get this thing up and running. The way I understand the article, the male G-Spot is kind of like one of those red "in case of emergency buttons." No, scratch that, it’s like the eject button on a VCR; there’s that better. I mean, you could pcy the tape out of the VCR, but it’s so much easier with the eject button, and much more pleasurable to boot. AaAahhh, she eject button, the way it makes the tape just pop so smoothly right out of that VCR. But I digress.

This article is wearing thin (if it’s ever had any weight).

I think your main problem may be that you just need to get used to this new "toy" of yours. In the “Cosmo” article, which I am sure was based on highly scientific medical experiments, they pointed out that it may take awhile. So don’t fret, satisfaction is on the button. I suppose the only advice I can give you is to persevere.
From Blu to XTC, Via Chicago

Pop Moves in New Directions While Post-Rock Gets Prominence

By Scott Staton

In 1987, Blu released a self-titled album that cosmically divided them household names in Britain, ironically winning long-deserved commercial success in America but leaving more than a few fans a little confused and somewhat skeptical. The group toyed with new ideas and styles, took a few steps away from excessive pop percussion, and delivered an album that is at times frustratingly inconsistent and tentative in its experimentalism. They needed to shed their skin and stylistically reinvent themselves. Their new release, 13, is proof positive that they succeeded. A dense, experimental work with emotional catharsis at its core (much has been made of the break-up between band members Damon Albarn and girlfriend of eight years Justine Frischmann of Elastica), 13 is more confident than the previous album and finds the group truly coming into its own. No associations can be made that Blu was ever content to cater to a certain audience or sound a particular way, and if they were made the group would most likely not give them a second thought. 13 is the sound of a very comfortable group doing things most pop stars have never even considered. Produced by William Orbit (noting Blur's relationship with long-time producer Streetek Sutt), the musical characteristic of the old Blur are gone, making room for gospel choirs, sculpted noise and feedback, and spacious arrangements. Finally, an album of singles, the music on 13 is never-thrillingly compulsory. It is a song cycle of sorts with little interludes separating some of the tracks. Each song has its own special place in the album's atmospheric layer. Damon's lyrics are delivered in the first-person and are at times quite personal, with "Tender," 1992, "Caramel," and "No Distance Left to Run" standing as some of the most moving songs Blur have ever delivered. 13 is Blur's most adventurous album to date. The group's musical evolution is tied to the demise of the dreamy most viable moving groups.

With the February release of his self-titled solo debut, Sam Pेफर's (not his last album as "Sea and Cake" and "Sunset" backed by two bands that formed from the ashes of Uncle Tupelo, Wilco first won much critical plau-

The artistic triumph of [Push Comes to Love] virtually legitimates Chicago post-rock scene's incestuous nature.
Rollerjam: Bastion of American Pride.

The legendary tale of a sport that has taken up permanent residence in the hearts of the American experience

By Lee Cohen

COUNTERTIMEs I have had people say to me, "Hey, earth to Luke, quit dreaming, man, and keep up with reality." And to this comment I would like to put my arm around Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and say, hey, this is America, land of the free, where dreams become reality. It is this land that gave rise to dreams such as Henry Ford's "Model T," Walt Disney's charactem Mickey Mouse, and Mr. Zachy and family's "Zachy Farm" chickens. Anyone who thinks these stories aren't paved with gold obviously has their head buried in the dirt, for those of us with our heads in the cloud can see these 25th highways and byways. We know that it takes a special man to find his way to these paths of glory, but we also know it takes a real "hero" to roller-skate them.

It was during the Great Depression, a time when money was scarce and living was not only short, but the hope of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "new deal," that the dark clouds parted and shed a warm light on the feet of Leo Seltzer. Not only was Leo an American, but a man—a man with dignity, pride, and a dream to fix this crazy-world gone-all-wrong. It was his highly developed intellect and profound human insight that helped make him the connection between marathon running, wheels, circles, and hand-to-hand combat that created the world's first roller derby. By December 1935, roller-derby was synonymous with "family values," and figures such as Herman Sotylak were esteemed as great athletes and esteemed warriors of Homeric proportions.

Never was there a game so versatile, so strategically complex. This was a game that required wit, intelligence, and class. Aside from the enjoyment one garnered from the aesthetics of this Dadaist performance, one became attuned to the art of contemporary society. Gender issues of the thirteen were quite apposite, for this was the first co-ed full-contact sport at which Americans could marvel. This was a time before humanism meant primly bimulacrae vomiting gin and potatoes on African landmine vic-tims, a time when women took matters into their own hands, on wheels. It is a crying shame that the world seems to have forgotten the day Josephine Bogash and her son Billy first strapped on their skates.

This 47-year-old housewife and 15-year-old broke down every social barrier placed in their path.

Of the many issues of the 30's, alcoholism was something these politically charged "ab-lutionaries" always stood firm against. Unfortunately, their bus driver Frank "Whiskey and Cheese" Winekeltz never took this oath of sobriety. February 12, 1937 was a night that almost ended roller-derby as we know it. Heading through 7am, Illinois, a very drunk "Whiskey and Cheese" drove the bus off of a twenty-foot slope, slamming into another car and killing 45 of roller-derby's major participants. Of the sur-vivors was Josephine Bogash, who was able to hold her son in her arms until the ambulance came. Little Billy lived, but only one year longer. After having his arms and legs amputated, he would dedicate what was left of his life to end driving. He and the surviving roller-titans decided they would roller-skate across America, starting in New York. As a part of the marathon, little Billy's body was passed as a baton until they reached San Francisco. With support from the President and major steel corporations, they funded the first-ever long-range skate with an amphetamine. Spoon-feeding Billy peanut butter, they were able to keep him in constant motion for two weeks until they finally reached sunny San Francisco. Once there, his mother met him on the Golden Gate Bridge, where she hugged him and said that in heaven they would definitely give him his arms and legs back. Billy is reported to have said, through a very peanut-buttered phlegm, "As long as there are roller-derbies on the feet of Americans, the fight against alcohol-ism will never end." His sobbing mother kissed him, wrapped his skates around his neck, and threw him to the sea. After his tragic demise, a statue were supposedly made which said "Billy Bogash. He gave us one leg and a leg to end drunk driving." It took a good year to get roller-derby back to the people. The majority of the players, too depersonalized to skate, looked to meditation to quit their depression. With the loss of some of their great players, Leo Seltzer knew it would take close to a miracle to bring the derby back to its feet. Nevertheless, in 1938, Leo and the remaining players where able to rally together a league that would shock the world. The year 1940 began the beginning of the roller derby "Golden Age." November 29, 1948 marked the first televised roller extravaganza, a show that millions watched. Everyone who owned a television dreamed of the day they could meet athletes such as the much-adored Johnnie Weston, captain of the Boppers. Jerry Seltzer, son of roller tycoon Leo, was not over the empire in 1958. Little Leo "Son of Roller Derby" Seltzer, proved he could do more than just follow in his father's footsteps. These glorious days following Jerry's reign inspired such movies as the critically acclaimed "Derby." The league flourished as a concrete American truth; it had made it through World War II, gotten through the McCarthyism of the fifties, and by 1970 seemed almost indestructible. The glory and prestige enjoyed by these few roller heroes seemed eternal, but little did they know that they only had three more years left to skate into the hearts of Americans. The Oil Embargo of 1973 proved to be the downfall of Jerry Seltzer's empire.

But now, as we stand on the cusp of the millennium, the world of roller sports has woken from its slumber. With much care it has been able to heal the wounds inflicted by oil embargo's taxation. Jerry Seltzer lost the battle, but he definitely did not lose the war. With the help of TNT, the station which brought you country sensa-tion Kenny Chesney, Jerry has been able to roll his empire back out into the limelight while meeting the demands of modern day soci-ety. To take a step past roller derby is to take a step into the ring of "Rollerjam," which has proved to be a post-modern thrust into the realm of roller sports. With a sped-up truck, the introduction of inline skates, a flurry of pre-game lights, one has a hard time, life-lifting one's jaw from one's lap. The hits not only seem stronger, but even seem to be more graceful than those vainglorious pictures so often at each other.

It is hard to discern whether following these physical artifacts around the track or following them around the country is more exciting. There are six professional teams with names as exotic as the Florida Sun Dogs and the Nevada Hot Dice. And if this doesn't appeal to your appetite then the issues are still as present as ever. The women are definitely out to prove that they are more than just blind hair and a good body on wheels. Janice Conenc of the California Quakes points out that before Rollerjam she was a professional cage dancer, but she makes it very clear to us that she didn't strip. Stacey Bunch, a Quakes All-star, a woman who left the kitchen years ago and knows no boundaries in cre-8ing a respect for women. She proved that thing I ever did was burger jumping tuples while on spring break," she said. This two-fisted error on wheels proves to be a modern-day Olympian de Gough in every shape and form. The true humanism of this sport radiates from Amy Craig. When asked to look past her skating career she stated, "I'm thinking about geriatrics, just like old people." Described by the Florida Sun Dogs captain as a woman who finds herself quick to quibble with anyone that has a bone to pick with these brazier-burning purveyors of women's pride. Denise is rather defiant in her position as a multi-talented human being. She makes it very clear to us that she is the only one running an all-women's team. She then broaches the subject of the Quakes All-star, Stacey Bunch, a Quakes All-star, a woman who left the kitchen years ago and knows no boundaries in creating a respect for women. She called the "Longest Half." The truth is, the skilled men of these teams prove to be as diverse as their women counterparts. Sean Atkinson lets us know that he is much more than your average biker on skates. He is also very good at making and selling that last spin on his spec-iality. Of all these athletes it is Sam Martin who proves to be the true master. His speed earned him the nickname "The Flame," and aside from this he is very proud of his ability to jump off a twenty-five-foot cliff without injury. He has long debated which of his two talents to choose, but don't worry, he prefers the hard-hitting trash spawned from Rollerjam to the corporate glamour of twenty-five-foot-cliff jumping. Of his devotion to the uniform, he states, "My body becomes my best weapon and I'll do anything it takes to gain advantage for my team."

It is this idea of "the team" which makes me proud to have Rollerjam a part of my heritage. The devotion to "the team," of which Sam "The Flame" Martin speaks, is what drives men with that dedication and drive, and all the dedication and drive, on which America was founded. Is life not a "team" effort? Like little Billy Bogash, don't we some-times feel unable to move while the passion for the fight still propels us forward? Is it not times like those that we have to play our part in the "team"—the team of life and death in America—where the team and spirit of our country alive? If we evolved to stand upright on our feet, would we not be foolish to stand still when we can move forward, or stand still when the future may seem to be more white trash than one can shake your soggy corn-dog at, but underneath, at the core of it, is the the will to prove that made our country, the United States of America, free.
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**BRIEF CASE/ BRIEF CASE/ BRIEF CASE/ BRIEF CASE**

This page contains the WXBC 540 AM Programming Schedule for Spring 1999. The schedule includes programming details for different days of the week, from Sunday to Saturday, with specific times and names of the programmers. The page is structured in a grid format, listing the days of the week along the top and times along the left side. Each cell contains the name of the programmer or segment. There are no images or diagrams present in this section. The text is clearly legible and formatted in a standard newspaper style.
A Bit of Spring Fun with Paddles and Players

the second coming...
Saturday May 1, 1999 10a.m.—3a.m. in the Old Gym
Admission: $3 w/ID $3 w/o ID
Free if you come naked (ID still must be on your person)

SUMMER JOBS FOR STUDENTS
The Rapid Music Festival needs Ushers, Caterers and Ticket Takers for this year's festival, August 15 & 19-22.
Contact Jeremy Barrett at 306-7410.

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Other Wold Wide Destinations—CHEAP!
Book tickets online at www.airtech.com
or 212-219-7000

(Images of people paddling and ticket sellers)

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Mexico, the Caribbean or Central America—
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(Images of people paddling and ticket sellers)
Letters to the Editor

To offensive@bard.edu,

You, whether you are one person or many, recently put some signs up that imitated the signs I created for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The signs, with which you replaced mine, with phrases such as "Take it on your back," "Live tiny displays," and "Think back the kitchens," were among the most juvenile, amateuiurish, and uncreative things I've seen in my three years at Bard. This is truly an accomplishment. But I'm wondering why you did it. I can't quite figure out why you felt the need to mock Sexual Assault Awareness Month, why you thought you had to degrade and humiliate all of the survivors of rape, childhood sexual abuse, and domestic violence, why you had to help silence those who may be struggling with these issues right now, perhaps when they are eating at Kline, looking up and seeing their lives demeaned and their hope dwindled when looking at your sign on the window. Maybe you thought you were being funny. Maybe you thought, "Hey, nobody but feminists, man-hating lesbians care about this stuff, and they take it so seriously," so you felt you could take a few jabs at women's equality. Maybe you thought that no one is raped or it is an abusive relationship. But to Bard, and everyone else, it's just a good laugh about it.

Rape. Relationship Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Abuse happen everywhere, and no one wants to think about it. Even fewer want to admit that it happens here too. I was extremely insulted and disturbed by your actions. I am not a survivor but I am part of the antirape movement. But I do not have to be either to be disgusted by what you've done. I do not want to speak for all the survivors who may be at Bard, or those who may be working through an abusive relationship or memories of child abuse as I write this. I do want to try to give these people the opportunity to speak about their experiences in their own voices. I want to try and create an environment where they can feel safe and supported when doing this. I would like to see everyone talk, even just for one day, about sexual violence, about how it has affected them already, about how it could affect them in the future about what it would be like to feel safe walking in Tivoli, Buys or downtown at night — to not have to treat everyone as a potential rapist. I would like to know that everyone would at least respect everyone else enough not to assault each other, physically or emotionally. The signs you put up do not allow this to happen. The signs you put up mocking the idea of equality and the concept of respect. I, for one, cannot and will not tolerate it. You have the right to free speech and so do I so I will speak out against them. But there is something to be said for taking responsibility for this right. If you try to put up these signs again, put your real name on them so others can respond to them. I will take them down like you did mine, but you will know that it was me who did it. If you want to hide behind a false e-mail name and pretend you're funny, feel free to do so. But if you want to talk about the issues you degraded, and if you want to understand my anger or let me understand yours, and if you want to do something to change things for the better, talk to me. If you don't want to talk to me, talk to BRAVE, talk to the chaplaincy, talk to your friends and professors, talk to someone and see what you can do with it. If you disagree with what is being said or don't, take responsibility for your actions and your words and try to construct something worthwhile and usable from it. But do not offend people, do not insult people, and do not silence people, because then nothing will change.

Sincerely,
Caia Pappas

PS — In the minimum amount of time I'm guessing it took you to make and post your signs — around three hours — sixty people, mostly women, were raped in the United States.