

# Entertainment

## GENRECID

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Most award ceremonies are as depressing as hell - rewards seem to be handed out for commercial success rather than actual talent, and the majority of musicians treat them with the contempt they deserve. Just think of the Emmys or Junos (or the Brits in the UK) and the way that they simply subscribe to current trends. Unless, of course, the judges realise that they have forgotten about someone for years and they feel that they have to make it up to them by lavishing vast numbers of awards upon them - need I say more than Eric Clapton?

But four years ago, a new prize was announced in Britain which was going to change this. The Mercury Music Prize was to be awarded to the best album each year by a UK artist. But rather than honour the usual suspects, the idea was to pick out an 'up and coming' talent and promote them. Nurture them. Love them. Quite a novel idea really.

And in the beginning, it worked; something which is demonstrated by the first three winners. In 1991, we had Primal Scream for *Screamadelica*; in 1992 it was the Orb for *U.F.Orb*; and last year it was Suede for the imaginatively titled *Suede*. Quite the array of talent really, and it looked as if it really was reflecting some of the best records put out that particular year. Until this year when it all went horribly wrong. Horribly wrong.

Not that anything seemed weird when the shortlist was announced. It consisted of Paul Weller's *Wild Wood*, Ian McNabb's *Head Like A Rock*, Blur's *Parklife*, Take That's *Everything Changes*, Shara Nelson's *What Silence Knows*, The Prodigy's *Music For The Jilted Generation*, M People's *Elegant Slumming*, Pulp's *His 'n' Hers*, Therapy's *Troublegum* and Michael Nyman's *The Piano Concerto*. Nothing too peculiar apart from the fact that may be some unfamiliar names there; something which I will come back to later. Soon after the list came out, a firm favourite emerged - Blur. Their trip through the last thirty years of British music received a plethora of good reviews, and it seemed that nothing could stand in their way.

But when the winner was announced on the 13th of September, it was (cue fanfare) M People. *M PEOPLE??* Quite a shock. Not to take anything away from them - their album was a real crowd pleaser with lots of that dancey stuff that the kids today seem to like so much. So I will take a moment to applaud their victory. That's enough. Yet that wasn't the worst part - the real scandal began when it was revealed that quite a large amount of money was bet on M People at the last moment by staff of a certain national radio station. And at odds of five to one, quite a tidy profit was made by all involved. The 'investigation' is still going on.

So how could this happen when the voting supposedly ended five minutes before the award was handed over? Damon from Blur said that he knew that they hadn't won two days before the ceremony; their album didn't win because it was too 'laddish' - a valid criticism? I really don't think so. So that makes it even harder to determine exactly why Blur didn't win, but after this entire charade the credibility of the award has really come into question; the press have been poking fun and the other nominees have called the whole thing a farce. And when I cast my cynical gaze over the

whole incident I must also side with the majority of the population, at least for this year's prize. Yet there is a little part of me that hopes and prays that this was just a temporary lapse and next year any possible corruption will be non-existent. We'll see. Until then, my heartfelt congratulations go out to M People. Honest, they do. Really.

There are quite a few other albums on that shortlist which deserve some of your attention, but there is a good chance that you haven't heard them. Or heard of the artists. Or they may not even be released on this side of the Atlantic. It just goes to show that there is a huge difference in the music which sells in different countries - just as most people here have yet to hear Pulp's album, most people in the UK have yet to be introduced to Spirit Of The West. Nevertheless, I beg of you all to go and seek out Pulp's *His 'n' Hers* - its a rather seedy little record with just about every song being connected with sex in some way or other. Usually the other. Jarvis Cocker's lyrics are best described as bizarre; just listen to 'Razzmatazz' for evidence of that. But when combined with the lush glam rock accompaniment its hard not to take notice - echoes of the likes of Roxy Music can be heard. And such a wonderful Cockney accent too. Its not hard to understand why they ended up being the runners-up.

Back in the eighties, a band called the Icicle Works were almost famous on several occasions. And now their lead singer, Ian McNabb has just released his second solo album, *Head Like A Rock*. His first effort was a fairly quiet affair, but on this one he does one of the most credible Neil Young impersonations I have ever heard. Mind you, the presence of two members of Crazy Horse do help with the illusion, particularly on 'Child Inside A Father'. He does his best to rock out too while continuing to chart the autobiographical journey through his life with 'Fire Inside My Soul'. It definitely deserved its place on the shortlist, and it just goes to prove that the committee did its job in selecting some of the albums. In fact, if you do stumble across any of them then you should give them a listen. All except for Take That - trust me; avoid them like the plague.

And there is no better place to hear some of this music than on your local campus radio station, CHSR FM. So that is why I get really annoyed when the talk of cutting funding to this fine organisation starts up again. People just don't seem to appreciate the service that it provides. Most obviously there is the music; not just your typical run-of-the-mill music but some of the more unusual stuff that you just won't hear anywhere else. But they offer so much more such as programming for ethnic groups, minorities, covering sporting events, special local events (for example, Highland Radio) and a cornucopia of other goodies too.

So do they simply cater to the interests of a few? Only if the majority of the campus can be called 'a few'. But the thing that really pisses me off is the way that some people just sit there bitching about the whole thing. Isn't CHSR an organisation made up of volunteers who actually decide on the schedule? Volunteers who can offer to produce programmes that they want to hear? What's the problem? If you are unhappy about what you are hearing, then do something about it - offer them your services rather than sitting in an office planning the best way to stop funding them.

## Cruise the Pitts in Interview...?



GEFFEN PICTURES  
Directed by NEIL JORDAN  
Produced by STEPHEN WOOLLEY & DAVID GEFFEN

By Eky

I've been seduced. Perhaps by some Karmic Retribution to humble me to an openly expressed disdain for Hollywood film. It is Anne Rice's screenplay and the vampires that ultimately dictated what the mood was to be though. Just when I was beginning to feel safe in my renunciation of Classic Hollywood Cinema—assuring myself that the best of the "Big" releases would adhere intrinsically to mainstream/right wing ideals. Then out comes "Interview with the Vampire" and even Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction," (but that's another story for another time.) So off I went to the Empire Theatre armed with the knowledge acquired from living with an Anne Rice aficionado. I was incredibly interested to see how the Hollywooders would deal with the delicate and possibly "unsettling" undercurrents of homo-eroticism and just plain erotica that flavor much of Rice's writing. I knew that to be true to the novel these would have to be portrayed realistically and as always I think, the prospect of "seeing" a piece of writing with which you are familiar, is gratifying and dare I say—tantalizing.

My findings? You don't have to be an Anne Rice enthusiast nor an avid reader of undead lore to appreciate the film version of the first book of Rice's celebrated series known as "The Vampire Chronicles." In thinking of "Interview with the Vampire" most people will think of the casting controversy concerning "all-American good guy" Tom Cruise portraying the androgynous, cocky antagonist—the Vampire Lestat. Surprisingly, perhaps, he did a wonderful job on such an "out of character" role, filling out Rice's character sufficiently enough to cause the author to publicly recant her objections to his casting. But Cruise is not the only known name to this film's credit. The

cast list reads like a reader's poll who's who of GQ including such top draws as Brad Pitt, Antonio Banderas, Stephen Rea and Christian Slater. Add to this list Kirsten Dunst whose extraordinary presence fills out what the director calls "the ultimate dysfunctional family."

Antonio Banderas (Philadelphia) and Stephen Rea (The Crying Game) take the roles of two European vampires to an exotic realm. Kirsten Dunst (realized the role of Claudia, the 6 year old woman/child with commendable ease while Brad Pitt stole the mesmerizing lead as the "interviewee" of the title, Louis de Pointe du Lac. Through the weaving of his tale he captures the longings and compassion of the all human souls with no exception for the interviewer, Christian Slater.

"Interview With The Vampire" is the story of human love, desire, yearnings; It exploits the inherent dichotomy of human nature, capitalizing on the coexistence of dark and light in the human soul. For this reason, and only this it seems to me, could it be morally unsettling to some as it draws parallels between good and evil; making disturbingly comprehensible comparisons merging darkness and light, love and hate. Louis' relationship to his beguiling mentor Lestat is manifests these polarities. As is clarified by the Jordan; "Lestat is all manipulation and devious charm, whereas Louis is all open-hearted emotion and doesn't really know how to deal with the world." Due to its moral subject matter "Interview..." can be duped a moral tale in many ways. "Louis makes this Faustian bargain: his pact with Lestat puts him beyond pain, beyond sickness, beyond death, but it also puts him beyond humanity. ..."

To reiterate an earlier point, the director identifies a possible source for the disturbing aspects of the film; "[Vampires/killers] are the 'heroes' of this movie, which is a really horrifying, but very original perspective." There can be no doubt that the narrative itself is a source of exciting opulence and spiritual interrogation; perhaps the 20-odd years in the making of this film will convince some

that the cinematography equals the storie's rich atmosphere.

The film itself was shot on location in New Orleans, San Francisco, Paris and England's Pinewood Studios on a reputed \$60 million budget. Lit entirely by Chinese paper lanterns, the scenes achieved that softly "almost candlelit" ambiance. The Paris atmosphere, a fair representation of the entire, is best described by the production designer as "gloomy, creepy and heavy, yet opulent." Says Jordan on bridging the time and geographical span of 200 years (5 time periods), and three cities in two continents, "We tried to stay true to each period, but we also had to convey a specific and different visual world for the picture. So, we created an over-ripe kind of atmosphere. Everything is slightly too rich, slightly too baroque, and that is very particular to this book."

Perhaps the most profound complement to this hauntingly sorrowful tale of love, longing, and desire is the appearance of the vampires. The narrative was enhanced by the icy vulnerability and emptiness present in Rice's undead which came through in the film. Stan Winston, in charge of vampire make-up and effects, in collaboration with other make-up artists "inspired by the emotional heart of the story," succeeded in capturing what is aptly described as the "regal otherworldliness" of the Vampires. Winston explains, "The feeling of the story is unsettling, yet elegant, and the look of the vampires is never intended to be off-putting, but always to maintain a grace and a beauty in their uniqueness."

Whether you go to this film to witness the preternatural beauty of immortality captured on film, or out of some loyalty to an image in your mind bearing Anne Rice's autograph—or just to see Tom Cruise in a new light (or darkness); just go. It may not mark the demise of classic Hollywood convention in film, but at least it dares to whisper what is disagreeable to mainstream values.