



Metallica or Nine Inch Nails. *Rising* is ideologically ugly. Ono sings from the emotional gutters of society. She speaks of bodies in rivers, drug dealers and child abusers, dildos and whores, bombs and terrors. Don't expect to hear *Rising* at The Grawood (don't expect to hear it anywhere except maybe on CKDU); it is a deep, searching album. Ono expresses a great deal of pain to the listener. The liner notes contain a passage describing her personal grief over the bombing of Hiroshima 50 years ago and she has lost and continues to lose friends to AIDS.

Yoko Ono's deceased husband's career (it will be 15 years since his death on Dec. 8) left her a millionairess. Her wealth has given her extra freedom to create her art unencumbered by consumer wants. Ono doesn't have to worry about selling 500,000 albums. She doesn't have to impress anyone.

"New York Woman" is surprisingly radio-friendly. This Lou Reed-style composition is two minutes of clanging rhythm guitar and tumbling cymbals setting a foundation for Ono's sugar-free lyrics. In the song, "Turned the Corner," Ono questions her much criticized past and the status of her present, but it is the guitar work that makes this a highlight of *Rising* — sorrowful and churning.

Backing up Ono, IMA (Japanese for now) is a trio made up of Ono's son Sean Ono Lennon playing guitar, Timo Ellis on bass (the guitar, not the fish), and Sam Koppelman playing drums. Although Ono wrote all of the music and lyrics on this album, IMA powers this project to success. Sean controls this album, laying down the thick rhythms for Ono's cutting lyrics.

Rising does have its low points. "Talking to the Universe" tries to be too hip. The combination of scratching records and rapping is better left to the Beastie Boys. The title track, which Rolling Stone magazine called, "14 minutes of crawling through shit to get to sunlight," is a classic Yoko Ono shriek — too laughable to be taken seriously. The last track, "Revelations," sounds like a lounge song performed at a Japanese karaoke bar. These weaknesses, although blatant, are not damning.

When asked about *Rising* prior to its release, Sean Ono Lennon said it would "blow our mind...[with] rockin' jams with [Ono] screaming her ass off." He didn't lie.

A. NEIL MACLEAN

Labcabin/california
Pharcyde
Delicious Vinyl/Capitol

Despite the fact that the Pharcyde's debut album, *Bizarre Ride To The Pharcyde*, was the most off-the-wall album of that year (and indeed, in recent memory), somehow the Pharcyde had settled in the minds of many listeners as just another great hip-hop group. So the Pharcyde did the only respectable thing in order to reaffirm their status as the most creative group around — they came out with a sophomore album weirder and more off-the-wall than their first.

Labcabin/california (the name of the LP and of their studio) contains all of the elements that made their first album a memorable one — unique rhyming styles, remarkably creative production, lyrics no-one else has the guts to do, and skits no-one else is silly enough to think up. *Lab...* does, however, contain one new element that will undoubtedly turn off some former fans — an R&B flavour on nearly every track.

Other distinctive features of *Lab...* include the large diversity in the topics dealt with, such as dealing with groupies, self-inspection, tales of friends gone too soon, industry horror stories, and some most enjoyably poetic trips into the demented minds of the Pharcyde. Also, this is one album that will serve a party well — listeners should find themselves grooving in natural ways they never thought possible.

Labcabin/california won't be as popular as the Pharcyde's first album, but it nonetheless stands out in today's flooded rap market. Tracks like "Groupie Therapy" and "Runnin'" are among the best out currently. And although those adverse to R&B will probably not like this album, Pharcyde fans and fans of quality hip-hop that goes down easy might want to pick this one up.

SOHRAB FARID



Blue in the Face smokes

At Wormwoods

FILM

Blue in the Face
Directed by Wayne Wang
and Paul Auster
Wormwood's, Jan. 12-18

BY MIKE GRAHAM

You are a fly on a wall.

Blue in the Face is a window into the lives of a very diverse set of Brooklyn characters and you are the quiet and un-noticed one in the corner of the smoke shop eavesdropping. It is not a tale of anything really, it's just interesting talk, by very interesting characters.

Blue in the Face is a side project that developed out of the filming of the movie *Smoke*, with the characters in question carried over from that film. The basic direction of *Blue...* was to lose the plot and just let the actors improvise over various Brooklyn-centred situations. The results are impressive considering that (supposedly) everything was filmed in single takes in a single week. But with actors such as Harvey Keitel, Victor Argo, and Jim Jarmusch in the cast, the dialogue flows, the characterizations are solid, and the improvisation is hilarious.

The *Blue in the Face* cast reads like the credits of an Altman flick. Keitel, Lou Reed, Roseanne, Lily Tomlin, Michael J. Fox and yes...Madonna (who plays a naughty singing telegram girl — I think she's finally learned where her place in film is).

The time-line is chronological, and that's about as structured as this movie gets (apart from the underlying unabashed love of Brooklyn). Scenes aren't linked in a "plot forwarding" way. The directors just put some text on the



Lily Tomlin

screen titling the next scene. There are some relatively trivial sub-plots which are taken care of, but true enjoyment of the movie comes from watching the characters' unscripted mannerisms, dialogue, actions and reactions.

Some of the situations are truly inspired and with this movie you know that the actors deserve the credit. Lou Reed's intermittent dope-head philosophizing is hilarious. Jim Jarmusch is great in making a production out of quitting smoking. And Harvey Keitel is the constant throughout the movie. Whether he's in charge of a scene or just laying back, he's great. He almost saves Roseanne scenes which speaks volumes for his acting ability. Too bad he wasn't around to save Lily Tomlin's dreadful scenes.

This film isn't brilliant or amazing, but it was a good watch and well worth seeing — if only once.

As infectious as a winter handshake

FILM

Twelve Monkeys

Starring Bruce Willis, Brad Pitt, Madeleine Stowe, and Christopher Plummer
Now playing at the Oxford

In 1997, a deadly virus wipes out 99% of the world's population and sends a handful of survivors underground. In 2035 a group of scientists, in an effort to find a cure for the virus and retake the surface of the earth, hatch a plan to send a man back in time to the days before the virus struck.

Twelve Monkeys is the story of James Cole (Bruce Willis), a convict turned time traveller whose mission is to travel to 1996, get a pure sample of the virus, and return. Or is it? Cole is committed to a mental hospital when he arrives in 1996, and suffers from apocalyptic visions which may or may not be reality.

Cole kidnaps his psychiatrist, played by Madeleine Stowe, and runs around looking for the Army of the Twelve Monkeys, a group who created the virus. She must decide between believing his story and helping him avert the impending apocalypse, and turning him in as a criminal psychotic.

Twelve Monkeys is a good film: the premise is interesting, the plot is neat, and the acting is satisfactory. Brad Pitt, who plays a lunatic turned animal-rights revolutionary, is fantastic, and provides great comic relief in the otherwise thriller-esque picture. Director Terry Gilliam is not very successful in his attempt to confuse the audience as to what is really going on, assuming that was his intention. Otherwise, the picture runs smoothly.

Most people will find something to like in this film: it is interesting, suspenseful, and at times funny. It is well-made escapism, which is more than can be said for most movies. For Bruce Willis, *Twelve Monkeys* is a nice diversion from his action blockbusters. Brad Pitt, as he did in *Seven*, makes up for some of his earlier films. It would be hard to call this movie a masterpiece of cinema, but it was certainly worth my five bucks, and that is the true test.

JAMES WORRALL

the box

Welcome to 1996 all you pine-breathing, crazy people. This is a new feature in the Gazette in which I will be letting you know of artsy happenings of import around Dal and around Halifax. If you want to let me know about something drop by the Gazette or write me (Tim Covert) some e-mail at gazette@ac.dal.ca.

■ Due to a lack of space, this week's *the box* is a list of the CD faves of the Gazette's cadre of album reviewers (and the staff of a local record company). If you think these writers are full of shit, come by the Gazette and volunteer to write some reviews yourself.

Aaron Dhir

PJ Harvey: *To Bring You My Love*
Guided By Voices: *Alien Lanes*
Sonic Youth: *Washing Machine*
Bjork: *Post*
Matthew Sweet: *100% Fun*

Sohrab Farid

KRS One: *KRS One*
The Roots: *Do You Want More?!!*
Organized Konfusion: *Stress: The Extinction Agenda*
Mobb Deep: *The Infamous*
Genius/Gza: *Liquid Swords*

Eugenia Bayada

Scooter... *and the beat goes on!*
KMFDM: *Nihil*
Oasis: *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?*
Black Grape: *Its Great When You're Straight... Yeah*
Various: *Batman Forever*
Eugenia's 5 albums to make you feel worse when you're feeling bad
Six Feet Under: *Haunted*
T-Spoon: *Joy, Life and Pain*
Fun Factory: *Fun-Tastic*
Bitty Maclean: *Just To Let You Know...*
Corona: (Any album)

Mike Graham

Primus: *Tales from the Punchbowl*
Royal Trux: *Thank You*
Robert Cray: *Some Rainy Morning*
Horseshoes and Handgrenades: *A Thousand Thousand Ways to Get Things Done*
The Cardigans: *Life*

Murderecords staff top ten

[Doesn't include nepotistic selections.]
Supergrass: *I Should Coco*
Elastica: *Elastica*
Zumpano: *Look What The Rookie Did*
The Motes: *Gesner*
Oasis: *(What's The Story) Morning Glory*
Absolutely Nothing: *Absolutely Nothing* (cassette)
Cardinal: *Cardinal*
Guided By Voices: *Alien Lanes*
Elevator to Hell: *Elevator to Hell*
Son Volt: *Trace*

Mohanad Morah

Jodeci: *The Show, The After Party, The Hotel*
Various Artists: "Friday" S/T
Various Artists: "The Show" S/T
Various Artists: "Bad Boys" S/T
Soul For Real: *Candy Rain*

Mark Farrant

Oasis: *(What's the Story) Morning Glory*
Alanis Morissette: *Jagged Little Pill*
Collective Soul: *Collective Soul*
David Bowie: *Outside*
Radiohead: *The Bends*

Tim Covert

Ashley MacIsaac: *hi™, how are you today?*
Elastica: *Elastica*
Rebecca West: *Burners On*
Bruce McCulloch: *shame-based man*
Various Artists: "Tank Girl" S/T