

What do you want to see in the arts section of *Excal*, your student newspaper

by Ira Nayman

There are 130,000 books published annually. Tens of thousands of records are produced. Over 7,500 hours of original programs are broadcast on television. More than 500 feature films are screened.

No single publication can claim to cover the arts comprehensively; there is simply too much. Most newspapers choose what gets covered based largely on what they believe their readers want.

Student papers like *Excalibur* don't have to work that way. Our funding does not rely on subscriptions or stand sales. This gives us a freedom commercial newspapers do not have: to write about what we believe should be covered.

But how to use this freedom? Should we cover the same movies, books, magazines, plays and other artistic events that the commercial media cover? Or, should we use our freedom to review alternative events which do not get covered by most other publications?

In other words: Hollywood movies or foreign and independent movies? Major record releases or smaller labels? Popular fiction or

less well-known publications?

We must find a balance between writing on mainstream and alternative works. The real question then becomes where to draw the line.

There are good reasons for *Excalibur* to promote alternative arts. As students, you are here to be introduced to things you might not otherwise experience.

Politically, ideas which eventually become accepted by the mainstream start on the fringes (consider the early history of feminism or environmentalism). Art has been called the Distant Early Warning system of society; social problems, and their solutions, often appear in alternative art forms before they reach the level of political debate.

Covering alternative art, then, isn't a luxury; it's a personal and political imperative. *Excalibur*, straddling the commercial and non-commercial worlds, is in a unique position to bring them together.

We would like to throw the subject open: what would you like to see in the arts section of your newspaper? If you have any thoughts on the subject, give us a call or write us a letter.

Even better, come in and write about the subject you would like to see covered. We are

arts

here as an outlet for student expression. No experience is required. We hold regular training seminars and the editors will help you if you haven't written before.

If you've seen the latest episode of *Married...With Children* or heard Metallica's album of well-loved children's songs, you probably think you know all there is to know about popular culture. But can you be sure?

As a service to its readers, *Excalibur* offers the following pop culture quiz. Try it and see how you rate.

QUESTIONS

- 1) What is Tarragon?
 - a) a local theatre specializing in Canadian plays
 - b) a spice you put in sauces to make them more exotic
 - c) what will happen to the world if we don't pay more attention to the environment
- 2) Who or what is Plath?
 - a) the name of a Pulitzer Prize winning poet and novelist
 - b) the name of the Maytag dishwasher repairman
 - c) the sound an egg makes when thrown against a brick wall
- 3) What is Andrew Dice Clay?
 - a) a full facial cleansing regimen using the finest ingredients from the Rouge River Valley
 - b) the surface of the Players International tennis tournament
 - c) old news
- 4) What is Kitchen Sink?
 - a) where Woody Guthrie washed his dishes
 - b) a comic book publishing company
 - c) the sequel to *Soapdish*
- 5) Which movie title would best describe the Gulf War?
 - a) *Terminator Two: Judgment Day*
 - b) *Rebel Without a Cause*
 - c) *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*
- 6) Which of the following people did not write for *The Toronto Star*?
 - a) Ernest Hemingway
 - b) Mariel Hemingway
 - c) Pierre Berton
- 7) Which of the following band names contains the most outrageous misspelling?
 - a) Beatles (Beetles)
 - b) Led Zeppelin (Lead Zeppelin)
 - c) Moxxy Fruvous (Joe's Dentist)

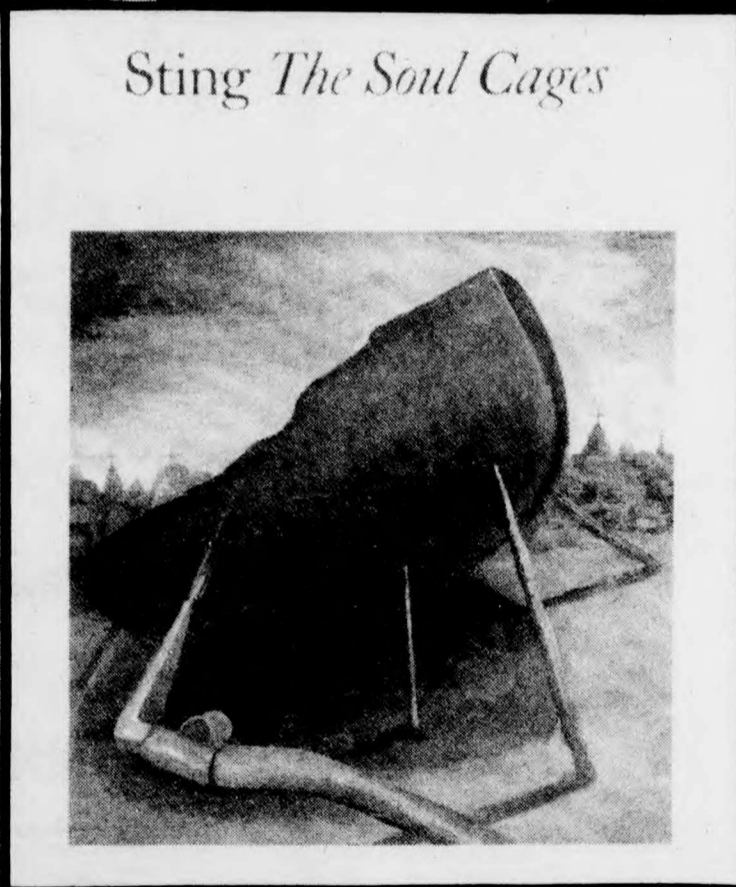
SCORING

	A	B	C
1)	7	3	4
2)	7	2	5
3)	4	3	7
4)	5	7	4
5)	6	5	7
6)	2	7	1
7)	7	3	1

0-15: There's no way of cushioning the news: you're arts illiterate, pal. You could hang your head in shame, not knowing how to respond when your friends start talking about Steven Spielberg's use of the pathetic fallacy. Or, you could come write for *Excalibur*, where we'll be happy to train you in all aspects of arts writing.

16-34: You have some knowledge of the arts; you're the kind of person who probably saw Madonna: *Truth or Dare*, but has enough taste not to admit that you enjoyed it. Writing for the arts section of *Excalibur* would give you the opportunity to put the knowledge you have to use, and help you round it out.

35-49: Congratulations on your knowledge! You probably know more about *Star Trek: The Next Generation* than the people who work on it! You're just the kind of person *Excalibur* could use for its arts section.



Okay. This is the deal. We can have reviews of mainstream stuff like *Child's Play 3* (top, left) and Sting's *The Soul Cages* (bottom, right) in the arts section of *Excalibur*. Really. We can. Or we can

run reviews of alternative stuff like Michel Marc Bouchard's *Lilies* (top, right) or Jana Sterbak's *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorexic* (bottom, left). Anything is possible, if you get involved.