

Lounge wizards

Swingers

Directed by Doug Liman

Written by and starring Jon Favreau

Swingers takes you to a time when martinis were the drink of choice and Sinatra was the Lord of the Lounge, when white walls pounded pavement and Las Vegas was Mecca. In other words, now.

Mike (Jon Favreau) is one of a million other hopefuls who clog up Los Angeles like fatty deposits in an artery. Mike's days are spent mooning over his ex-girlfriend and watching his friends play Nintendo. At night he is out with the boys on marathon martini binges at the Lava Lounge or stealing booze from

parties in the Hollywood hills. All of them dream of fame and fortune while waiting for the phone to ring, angling not for a chance on the big screen, but for a spot on a sitcom. It is the Hollywood dream scaled down to slacker size.

A slacker film set in the lounge scene — it had to happen. Mike and his pals know the retro-lingo and the retro-look, heading out to check on the "babies" in perfectly creased pants and body-hugging muscle shirts, sporting crewcuts and sideburns. But this is a film that relentlessly pops pretensions. All of that look and style come to nothing when Mike tries to pick up a model at a party in the hills, only to be

asked what kind of a car he drives. "Uh... a Cavalier," he stammers, "a red Cavalier." The model turns back to her friend.

Anti-climaxes like this provide the film with its best moments. A pilgrimage to Las Vegas ends in a casino jammed with video lottery terminals being played by blue-haired grandmothers; an attempted pick-up ends in ignominy when Mike is recognized as the guy who was applying for work at Starbucks. Mike moves in a world that is eerily familiar, a world filled with unemployed friends who drink coffee served by university-educated waitresses, and where social awkwardness serves as the cement that binds us together.

Swingers is Hollywood



filmmaking at its best: witty, fun, honest and touching. Ultimately, the movie draws to a disappointingly Hollywood ending, but that goes with the territory. At least getting there is a great ride.

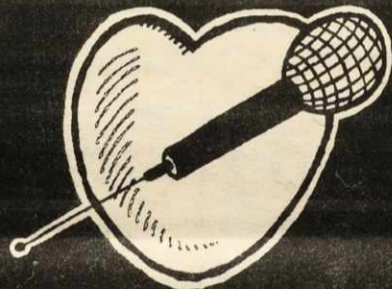
Swingers is playing at Wormwoods Cinema from Friday, February 21st until Thursday, February 27th.

GREG BAK

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Freak Show
Silverchair
Epic

When Silverchair came out with *frogstomp*, everyone sniggered at the teenybopper Nirvana wannabes from Down Under. Their follow-up, *Freak Show*, should muzzle those critics once and for all as it is even better than its predecessor.

Silverchair's blend of Metallica-meets-Nirvana quite simply works, yet most people will probably choose words like "sell-out" to describe *Freak Show*. From the title track, "Slave", right through to "The Closing", this CD is jam-packed with monumental alternative anthems. With timeless lyrics like, "Couldn't care less if I died right now / Who am I? / I don't know you tell me / You seem to know everything else," and, "Take the time to learn to hate / Come and join the mass debate," Silverchair are fast becoming the spokesmen of their generation — no mean

feat if you consider that they have an average age of seventeen.

The concept of Silverchair no doubt started on the Nirvana bandwagon. Their music is not a copycat style, more a continuation of the legacy left behind by Kurt Cobain. The angst delivered by lead singer Daniel Johns on tracks like "Slave", "Cemetery" and "Pop Song For Us Rejects" is addictive, however depressing it may be.

"Abuse Me" is one track that is worth a special mention as it develops from a gentle alternative ballad to an anthem of immense proportions. The sing-a-long refrain, "C'mon abuse me more I

tracks on *Freak Show*, collaborating with drummer Ben Gillies on the music of some songs like "Nobody Came", "Roses" and "Learn To Hate".

All three members of Silverchair (the third person is bass player Chris Joannou) are very good musicians in their chosen field. While the band may not survive past the hype, Johns, Gillies and Joannou should be around for a while to come. Unlike other young band members, they can play their instruments and aren't desperately trying to tap into the oh-so-lucrative preteen-female market.

frogstomp is a contemporary classic and there's no reason why *Freak Show* shouldn't go the same way. One can only hope that Silverchair doesn't end like Nirvana did.

EUGENIA BAYADA

Nerf Herder
Nerf Herder
Arista Records

Hmmm...not much of an impression here, good, bad, or otherwise. Nerf Herder is just another one of your nasal, boring Weezer-wannabe bands. Now that genre isn't exactly my cup of tea, but if it catches your interest, check them out.

The album consists of ten whiny ballads about music and women. "Van Halen" (it's a song folks) is one of the shining



like it," together with the end mantra of, "Throw the sailors overboard," makes for an incredibly memorable track. If Silverchair were to be remembered for one song, chances are this would be it.

Lead singer and guitar player Daniel Johns wrote most of the

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