

ARTS & CULTURE

The best and worst in the world of arts and culture

COMPILED BY GREG
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While 1997 has come and gone, it's wise to take a look back at the last twelve months in the world of arts and culture. Some would say that in hindsight we should honour the achievements of local and worldwide artists, but after a brief and informal poll, we came to the realisation that the biggest reason we should reflect on 1997 is so that we can understand where the world went wrong. In a year that featured the Spice Girls, Puff Daddy, and the persistence of Bush (who have dropped the X), the arts community has been mired in a collective shudder of disgust. Our only way of projecting a small ray of hope on the future is by giving credit to those accomplishments which have been great.

And now, the best and worst of 1997.

Best CD: Radiohead — OK Computer

This follow-up to their previous CD, *The Bends*, provided the same buzz which surrounded Beck's *Odelay* in 1996, and gave us an alternative to the idiocy provided by the Gallagher brothers of Oasis. British rock may not be dead after all.

Worst CD

This was a tough one. Actually, coming to a clear decision was so tough that we decided on three "favourites".

Puff Daddy and the Family — No Way Out

From exploiting the death of a friend to exploiting the success of previous artists, one has to wonder where it will end. I'd like to see him come up with his own music, for a change. His sidekick Mase gained success by using Puff's name, but we all know that when the public-at-large gets sick and tired of Mase's nasal whine, Puff will drop him like a sack of potatoes.

Bush — Deconstructed

Alternative rock's pariahs and scavengers decided they'd become electronica's pariahs and scavengers. This time it's even worse. I can't believe they released this disc, considering that Kurt Cobain did nothing like it.

Oasis — Be Here Now

I've heard this CD before; it was originally called *What's The Story (Morning Glory)?*

Best Song: Beck — "New Pollution"

Odelay is about as innovative as you can get, and no one has come remotely close to copying or

matching his skill and image. Beck knows how to tell a story and write a great song.

Worst Song: Puff Daddy — "I'll Be Missing You"

If the fact that he exploits two things at once (the Notorious B.I.G. and the Police's "I'll Be Watching You") isn't enough to make your stomach turn, the video showing Puff's fall off a motorbike travelling two kilometres an hour might just



make you laugh.

Best Local Band: Big City Blues

Forget all of that Halifax pop stuff, 'cause it's getting pretty stale. Big City Blues forges its own path in a city that is seriously void of any soul.

Worst Local Band: Devora

Haven't heard of them? There's a reason for that.

Best Movie: L.A. Confidential

Finally, a cop movie with a storyline that goes deeper than forced

tension between a rough-around-the-edges cop and a gorgeous damsel-in-distress that he is obviously going to have sex with sometime during the film. Kind of makes you forget about Eddie Murphy's *Metro*.

Worst Movie: The Beautician and the Beast

Fran Drescher doesn't belong in movies, let alone TV. Her whiny nasal twang was never funny — just annoying.

Best Local Concert: Rascalz at the On Music Festival

Short but sweet. The Lord Nelson Ballroom was set a-buzz for this 45 minute set, and the hip-hop artists left the audience wanting more.

Worst Local Concert: The Veas at the On Music Festival

About two hours before the Rascalz hit the stage, the Veas were there. Considering that the Veas did nothing but put the audience to sleep, it's a wonder that the Rascalz put on such a good show. They must have missed the Veas' performance.

Best Bar: Ryan Duffy's Speakeasy

There isn't much you can ask for that this place doesn't have — pool tables, TVs, chairs, music that isn't played at a grossly high level, and a fairly relaxing atmosphere.

Worst Bar: The Palace

You can actually see the scum dripping off the walls. If being

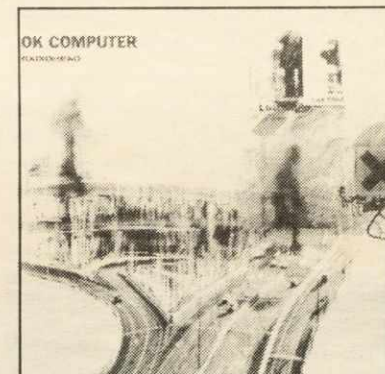
propositioned is your thing, you may like the Palace. "Hey baby, let's dance... is that 'Barbie Girl' I hear?"

Best Beer: Alexander Keith's India Pale Ale

Keith's is still the beer of choice for many, but an honourable mention goes out to the new local micro-brew, **Garrison Brown Ale**.

Worst Beer: Moosehead

From Moosehead Light to Moosehead Green to Moosehead



Dry, it has become a well accepted fact that Moosehead is a disgusting drink. The next time I want a meal, I'll get something to eat.

Best Restaurant: Il Mercato Ristorante

Fairly affordable, but with a bit of a pretentious atmosphere; the good thing about Il Mercato is that you can make it what you want to. You can go dressed up or stay casual and not feel out of place.

Worst Restaurant: Mundo Latino

It has an interesting layout, but its tiny portions of interesting concoctions leave you feeling unfulfilled. If you drink a Moosehead with your dinner, it may alleviate any concerns. But then there's the problem of taste...

Best Fast Food: McDonalds

For some reason, despite all that grease, McDonalds is still going strong. Possibly the ambience provided by a zitty 16-year-old serving heat-lamp "meat" and "healthy" salads is what brings customers back.

Worst Fast Food: Swiss Chalet/Harvey's on Spring Garden

It's hard to believe that you're being served premium chicken in the same place you can get a crispy chicken burger.

Best Place to Eat on Campus: The University Club

But we're not allowed up there.

Worst Place to Eat on Campus: They All Suck. That being clear, **The Grawood** seems to disgust most of those polled.

Worst Trend

"All trends don't last, all trends suck ass," said John Cullen. As much as that may be so, **puffy vests** and **Columbia jackets** are getting pretty tiresome. Come to think of it, **Tommy Hilfiger** stuff is pretty gaudy as well.

Social commentary in the era of AIDS

Last Night In Paradise: Sex and Morals at the Century's End

Katie Roiphe
Vintage

Despite the present title attached to the latest book by Katie Roiphe, an adequate replacement would be "Exposing The Myth".

That is exactly what Roiphe does. Although dealing with touchy subject matter, Roiphe manages to tear apart the arguments coming from the moral right-wing, who equate romanticism with stupidity.

While she begins her book by studying the effect AIDS has on her sister, Emily, she quickly focusses on America's sexual climate in the age of the disease. Roiphe deftly weaves an argument that tries to find a

balance between the sexual freedom of the late 1960s and the cold, calculated responsibility of the 1990s.

Roiphe laments the loss of "passion", but not irresponsibly; she shows how tragic the "sexual liberation" lifestyle can be. Instead of creating heroes out of hedonists, she shows, through case studies including Magic Johnson and French filmmaker Cyril Collard, how flawed decision-making can lead to irrevocable consequences. Magic Johnson is living with

AIDS, while Cyril Collard has already succumbed to the disease.

Cases like these are used to empower right-wing actors such as Bob Dole and Jerry Fallwell,

who promote a return to family values and a more conservative America. However, Roiphe attempts to protect readers from their brand of hyper-morality by showing how the implanted fear of AIDS has

manipulated the general lifestyles of most North Americans. Roiphe claims that this fear has transcended the realm of AIDS

and has spread into daily life, magnifying each minor risk that people take during the day.

In an era when movie directors have turned into public health officials, and people become born-again virgins simply out of the fear of contracting an STD, Roiphe believes that society has taken fear to an extreme level. She seeks an injection of feeling into the logical responsibilities which govern our times.

Insightful and balanced, *Last Night In Paradise* is an accurate and astute portrayal of a sexual climate suffering from an identity crisis.

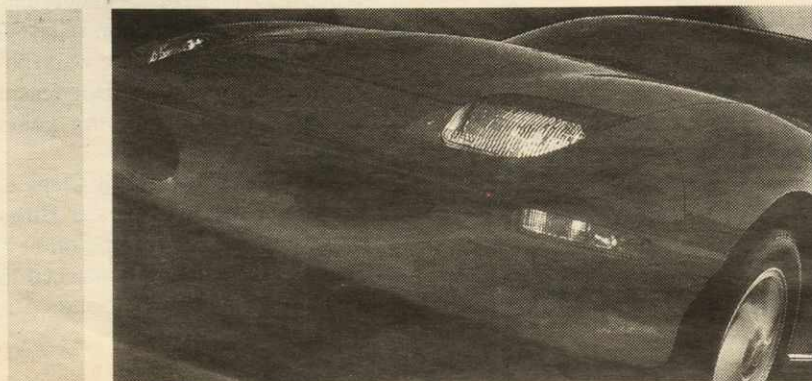
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