

"Plans" misses its mark

Alicia Collins

Assistant Features Editor

Death Cab for Cutie is a quirky, energetic band with unbelievable lyrics that only Ben Gibbard, the band's lead singer, could create.

The band just made a huge jump from Barsuk Records to Atlantic, which is understandable given its current amount of publicity since having songs played on hit TV shows such as "The O.C."

Death Cab went from a band no one had ever heard of to mainstream pop. Every time I turn on the radio I hear "Soul Meets Body," the hit song from its new album "Plans."

Its new album isn't necessarily a disappointment, but in no way does it live up to the standards created by the amazing album it released two years ago, "Transatlanticism."

Death Cab's music slowly has progressed from a more upbeat pop sound to one that is incredibly mellow, and although mellow is good, I like to listen to music and not fall asleep in the process.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy the CD thoroughly, but there are very few, if any, points in which the songs noticeably pick up tempo.

However, taking into consideration that the songs are about the relationship between love and death, it is understandable.

The album opens slowly, then intensely, with "Marching Bands of Manhattan," which has a soft, church organ sound and lyrics saying, "Your love is gonna drown."

I will continue to listen to Death Cab if only for the lyrics. They are simply amazing. In "Soul Meets Body," Gibbard says, "If the silence takes you, then I hope it takes me too."

If listeners are not impressed by poetry in the form of lyrics, they undoubtedly will find themselves humming or singing the catchy "Ba da ba da ba" phrase found in the song.



Death Cab for Cutie, an underground band gone mainstream, released their latest album "Plans" in August 2005.

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There is one song on the album that I simply do not enjoy. "Different Names for the Same Thing" didn't interest me even before the lyrics began. The piano serves as a lullaby as opposed to accompaniment to Gibbard's singing.

The song seems to stop directly in the middle where it then picks up tempo, yet without lyrics, for about 30 seconds. Unfortunately, by that point I had switched songs.

The entire song seems to repeat the title again ... and again ... and

again. I felt as if I knew the lyrics to the entire song the first time I listened to it all the way through. I probably do, and never again will I listen to the whole song.

Luckily, that song ends, and "I Will Follow You into the Dark" saves the band's reputation. It is possibly the best song on the album.

Gibbard says, "If heaven and hell decide that they both are satis-

fied, if no one is beside you when your soul embarks, I will follow you into the dark," providing further proof of his brilliance.

As the songs continue I began to realize just how similar the music itself sounds. Each song has a slight difference, picking up more tempo with the middle songs, yet the album as a whole is very melancholy.

"What Sarah Said" begins with a beautiful piano solo followed by soft, comforting lyrics singing, "And then it came to me that every plan is a tiny prayer to father time."

Although it takes about a minute for the tempo to pick up at all, and 30 seconds after that for lyrics to appear, I was impressed nonetheless by "Brothers on a Hotel Bed."

The lyrics are about a love that

has faded, saying they now say good night from separate sides like brothers on a hotel bed, and the presentation is exceptional. The song ends with the lyrics, "You may tire of me as our December sun is setting 'cause I'm not who I used to be," perfecting the tone of the piece.

The album ends fittingly with "Stable Song," in which Gibbard sings about the end of life.

For those who have never listened to Death Cab before, this CD might not be the perfect representation of the band's abilities, but it's close.

While "Plans" has nothing on "Transatlanticism," it does the job. There are the songs I love, and the songs I can barely listen to all the way through, but overall the CD was well worth the \$15 my mom spent.

Music Review

Death Cab for Cutie
"Plans"
Label: Atlantic Records
Release: Aug. 30



Brokeback breaks norm

Unique movie brings gay romance into mainstream culture

Erin Clark

Features Editor

"Brokeback Mountain" is a classic story of star-crossed lovers.

OK, maybe not quite classic — one basic "classic" requirement is missing.

But besides heterosexuality, it's all there. Sweet affection, angst, passion, tension and yes, sex.

If the fact that the lovers in question are both men means the movie cannot be termed "classic," so be it. "Brokeback Mountain" is still a great romance.

Although "Brokeback Mountain" escaped the obvious stereotypes, it did fall into some others. Ennis (Heath Ledger) rarely took off his ten-gallon hat, and he mostly communicated in leathery old cowboy grunts, although the acting made up for his lack of dialogue throughout the movie.

Jack (Jake Gyllenhaal) is a different kind of cowboy. He is more boisterous, and it seems his personality is the key to overcoming Ennis' distant toughness and getting him to express himself.

From the first scene of the awkward attraction, it is clear facial expressions and body language will be important.

In the beginning, both Ennis and Jack apply for the same job: guarding sheep on Brokeback Mountain.

While camping in this picturesque land, they fall in love. The beginning scenes are a little slow, but they establish the characters well.

One night, after a bottle of whisky, the two men succumb to their desires.

The next morning they as-

sure one another that it was a one-time thing and that they are not "queer." However, their love is deeper than a one-night stand, and they realize this quickly.

Just as in a more mainstream movie, the love scenes range from desperately brutal to tender and gentle.

The two men become physically affectionate beyond just having sex, and this ends up "outing" them to their boss. He orders them off the mountain, and grief at parting causes a rift in their still-new relationship.

Although their summer on Brokeback is cut short, and their parting is difficult beyond imagination, Ennis and Jack have begun something unstoppable.

Four years later, the men are married with kids. Neither is exactly a happy marriage. One day Ennis receives a postcard

from Jack, who will be stopping in town.

The second they see each other, a passionate affair begins.

Ennis's wife, Alma (Michelle Williams), discovers the truth from the beginning when she spots the men's zealous reunion in the hallway

outside the apartment. She keeps her mouth shut for a long time, although Ennis begins to think people are beginning to find out.

Several times during the 20-plus years that Jack and Ennis go on their "fishing trips," Jack tries to convince Ennis to leave his wife so they can live together on a little ranch. However, Ennis's childhood won't allow him to believe in happily ever after for the two of them. He recounts a story of a grisly hate crime against a gay man and how his father made him look at the mutilated body when he was only nine years old. He tells Jack it will never work out, and they just will have to live with sneaking around and see-

ing each other only once every few months.

Jack does not want to accept the situation, but he can't give up on his love for Ennis. He drives from his home in Texas to see Ennis in Wyoming whenever he gets the chance.

When Ennis' marriage falls apart, Jack shows up right away in hopes that they can begin a new life together. Ennis turns him away, saying he has to pay child support, and he can't just walk away from his obligations.

The fact that both men are cheating on their wives isn't really addressed beyond Alma's silent suffering. Later, it becomes clear that Jack's wife also knew what was going on.

The concept of cheating gets pretty complicated when Jack's desire can't be assuaged in the once every few months that he sees Ennis.

The idea of cheating on both his wife and Ennis is one that gets considerable exploration. I won't spoil the movie, but let's just say Ennis and Jack's relationship is challenged by their inability to be together physically.

A critical flaw in the movie is its ending. The whole film is done with a sort of tragic flair, but the movie has so many options for tragic endings that this doesn't give much away — until you've seen the end and compare it with the Hollywood typecast, at least.

Director Ang Lee could have made a much more powerful statement with a different conclusion to this epic love story.

Nevertheless, "Brokeback Mountain" breaks new ground in social acceptability.

Obviously it requires open-mindedness toward sexual orientation, an area that some people choose to pretend doesn't exist. I hope that theatergoers will choose to show this movie despite what many may consider loaded content. People deserve to make the choice to view the movie themselves.

Brokeback Mountain is beautiful and classily done. Anyone willing to give it a chance will be glad they did.

Even though you might have to make quite a little road trip to see "Brokeback Mountain," it's worth the time, the drive and the gas money.

Movie Review

'Brokeback Mountain'
Director: Ang Lee
Starring: Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal
Release: Nov. 24



Super Crossword DAFFYNYIONS

ACROSS	49 Wading bird	96 Fusillades	9 Stadium shout	50 Singer Marie	82 Colossal fossil
1 Assert	51 Banishes bacteria	99 With 69 Down	10 "— Fine Day" ('63 tune)	51 Nursery furniture	83 Out of control
6 Booth	52 Blueprints	100 Lament	11 — es	52 Ritzy	84 Ready to eat
Tarkington novel	54 Neckline style	101 Diarist Nin	12 Solt's stick	53 Like a wet noodle	86 Runner Zatokpek
12 Soft lump	55 Thompson or Salonga	102 Aachen article	13 Ford or Grey	57 TV's	88 Furious
16 Palm Sunday beast	56 At daybreak	103 Nomad pad	14 Horatian creation	58 Generic grade?	89 "My — True Love" ('54 song)
19 Tom of "Amadeus"	58 Objective	104 Sternward	15 Feasts	59 Fellow	92 Reggae's Peter
20 Herbivorous lizard	59 Ms. Lolobrigida	107 MARGOLD	16 Oriental title	60 Sovereign's title	93 Cake and candy
21 Verdi heroine	60 Big rig	113 Not as common	17 Wheel part	61 Manuscript imperative	94 Actor Ziering
22 Mineral spring	61 Martha Stewart's concern	115 Catchall abbr.	18 More rational	62 Prepare cherries	95 — Heights, CA
23 Snake-spearan sprite	64 MINIMUM	116 Beehive State	25 Drive the getaway car	63 Table	96 Morley of '60 Minutes"
24 CAUTERIZE	69 Legendary Yankee	117 Yasser —	26 — tuck 29 LAX	64 Girl Scout unit	97 "West Side Story" role
27 Favorite	71 Playwright Clifford	118 Join forces	29 Comic	65 Actor Calhoun	98 "Camelot" prop
28 Not as much	72 Hold up	119 Comic Charlotte	32 Spouse	66 Matinee —	99 Swaggering
30 He'll give you a squeeze	73 Soap additive	120 Betting setting	33 Master Potter	67 Rueful cry	102 Anthropologist Fossey
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33 TV's "Highway to —"	78 Promise	DOWN	36 Max — Sydow	70 Literary pseudonym	105 Chalky cheese
37 Civil War era senator	81 Ipanema's locale	1 Bloke	37 Economize	74 Unisex garment	106 Arduous journey
38 POLYGON	82 Hall or Hannah	2 Decoy	38 Stagger	75 Therefore	108 Hwy. '01 film)
42 Prepare cherries	83 "Manon" melodies	3 Came down to earth	39 Be an advocate	76 Succinct	109 "I Am —"
43 Part of Q.E.D.	85 Christopher of "Deathtrap"	4 "— Station Zebra" ('68 film)	40 Japan's first capital	77 Word with mark or money	110 In favor of Miles
44 Senator Spector	87 INFANTRY	5 Laid-back	41 Chef Prudhomme	78 Actress Miles	111 Pabulum variety
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	90 Eloquent equine	7 Corporate clashers	46 Dislodge	80 Gets hitched	114 Unpopular picnicer
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	92 PARADOX		48 Dread		

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