



Jonas Brothers sell sex despite rings

BY HARRY BURSON
Reviewer

Make no mistake: rock 'n' roll is based on sex.

Not that Elvis or the Beatles necessarily realized what they were doing — it's not really a conscious thing. But with those moves and the fervent screams from throngs of teenage girls, the reason for the hysteria is easier to pinpoint than we would like to admit.

So in response to "South Park" and, like, all the critics: yes, "Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience" and the entire Jo Bros machine largely is based on the boys' good looks and (mostly) oblivious eroticism. Like, duh.

There are some suggestive scenes. See the gorgeous Joe Jonas in all his shirtless glory. See teenage fans reach a little too close for comfort as he kneels on the front of the stage. And yes, see the boys shoot their, uh, white foam all over the audience. But don't dwell on it too long.

The brouhaha is based on the boys' notorious purity rings. So the boys are following in Britney's footsteps, slyly selling sex while claiming chastity.

Actually, "slyly" is the wrong adverb to use in that sentence and not only because it looks awkward. I honestly buy the boys' purity bit. They are just Christians with a message — nothing wrong with that.

I believe critics have objected



With the release of their new film, *The Jonas Brothers 3D Concert Experience*, the brothers sing for their dedicated fans in sensual scenes.

to the Jonas Brothers thus far for three reasons. First, the band does not recognize the inherent contradiction of purity in a rock 'n' roll context. Second, our culture does not want to recognize that teenage girls have lustful thoughts. And

finally, of course, the group is a puppet of the monolithic Disney Machine.

But enough context already, let's talk about the movie itself. How does it hold up as a piece of entertainment?

As the title clearly states, it is in fact a 3D movie, which adds a certain excitement to any dull moments. Disney seems to have improved the technology since the nearly identical Miley Cyrus movie. Guitars, microphones and

drum sticks fly at the camera constantly. That is a good thing.

The concert itself primarily focuses on material from the band's latest CD, "A Little Bit Longer." Augmented by a four-piece backing group and a string section, the boys perform their material competently. Without the glossy studio production, the boys' material sounds a little harder, and the few sour notes they hit only reassure that it is in fact a live performance.

The boys are joined by the newest Disney starlet, Demi Lovato, who duets with Joe on an insipid song from the "Camp Rock" T.V.-movie. They later play a song with Nashville up-and-comer Taylor Swift — a high point of the film. If you're not on board with her yet, you're a fool.

The concert itself is framed by various behind-the-scenes shenanigans meant to evoke the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night," complete with throngs of girls chasing the brothers around New York City. Oldest brother Kevin hams it up way too much, but on the whole, these scenes are the most entertaining, especially for those who are unfamiliar or unreceptive to the Jo Bros' bland power-pop.

This film was made for the Jonas Brothers' massive fan base, not to convert new fans. If you don't understand their appeal, this movie won't provide any insight, just a glimpse into the heyday of the biggest boy band of the second half of this decade. Living the dream indeed.

Truman time-travels with legendary band

BY TYLER GEORGE
Reviewer

The famous Duke Ellington Orchestra visited Truman March 17. The jazz ensemble, which has been impressing audiences nationwide for more than 80 years, performed in Baldwin Auditorium as the finale of this year's Kohlenberg Lyceum Series. It was quite the finale for a great year of Lyceum events, which also brought the Canadian Brass Ensemble to Kirksville last semester.

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was born in 1899 and began his musical career with piano lessons at age 7. He lived through most of the jazz era and played many different styles of music but mainly stuck to the big band and swing genres. His contribution to the world of jazz, or "American music," as he liked to call it, was great, and he is considered one of the greatest names in jazz. He died at age 75 in 1973, but his orchestra continues to play the music that revolutionized jazz.

The ensemble had a classic big band set up, consisting of a front line of two alto saxophones, two tenor saxophones and a baritone saxophone, a middle line of two trombones and a bass trombone and a back line of four trumpets and a rhythm section, including a drummer, upright bassist and pianist, of course.

The orchestra made its way on stage for a late start at 7:40 p.m. and began with a chart that, according to Thomas James, the orchestra's pianist and conductor, needed no introduction: "Take the 'A' Train." The band members were dancing in their seats and laughing, obviously loving every minute of it. Other charts played includes "Cotton Club Stop," "Concerto for Cootie," "Black and Tan Fantasy," "Harlem Air-Shift," "The Mooche," "Satin Doll," "In a Sentimental Mood" and "Cotton Tail."

They played most of what are Ellington's well-known charts, but I was surprised at one

chart that was not in the set list. If you're an Ellington fan, you probably can guess that I'm referring to debatably Ellington's best-known chart, "It Don't Mean

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A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)." The chart is identified most simply by hearing the title, and I was certain that it would meet my ears that night. I was incredibly surprised when James, the frontman for the night, announced that their time was up. It was the only thing about the concert that disappointed me — everything else about the show was stellar.

The ensemble was very entertaining on stage. All of the players seemed very animated and comfortable, to the point that it seemed

as if I personally knew them all by the end of the performance. It was obvious that they all shared a common love for music and lived to make others understand and have the same appreciation for music as they did.

At one point during the show, right before a tune began, a baby started crying. The pianist responded immediately, almost as if it were premeditated, with Johannes Brahms' "Lullaby." The baby stopped crying, and the ensemble continued with the show. I think that this event alone contributed greatly to the band's performance. It made them more amicable and not just a bunch of musician robots on stage playing just another show. We were special to them, and they valued their time with us very much.

If you did not attend this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, I'm afraid you missed out. The performance was incredible and served as a pleasant reminder to the Lyceum Committee, the Kirksville community and Truman students that jazz, though dying, is not yet lost.

Paul's Boutique stays fresh

BY FRANKLIN CLINE
Reviewer

Two decades after its initial release, "Paul's Boutique" by the Beastie Boys, rap's foremost Jewish trio, is still fresh, relevant and interesting.

The powers that be have decided they're not making enough money off this classic album and have elected to re-release a remastered version both on compact disc and 180-gram vinyl to commemorate its 20th year of existence.

This is fine by me because the album has been out of print on vinyl for years, and both versions intimately restore the album's elaborate original packaging, a massive gatefold panorama depicting a long New York City street meant to be both a symbol of the universal in its infinite city blocks and personal in its depiction of those particular stores and buildings with no information about the artist or track listing with the sole exception of the spine that confirms what you're holding really is what you think it is: "Beastie Boys — Paul's Boutique." Really, the strange, inaccessible nature of the packaging is the inverse of the album's entirely open, inviting feeling and tone.

Much of the attractiveness of "Paul's Boutique" — and believe me, there is a lot to like in this album's slim 55-minute running time — comes from its wild unpredictability and the seamless way in which it unites so many seemingly disparate genres (sometimes in a single track — witness the way in which "Eggman" forces a sample from Sly & The Family Stone and Bernard Hermann's theme from "Psycho") in ways that, in 1989, were absolutely phenomenal things that only were happening to popular music within the field of hip-hop.

Times have changed, though, and now the art of sampling has been taken to its logical meta-conclusion by groups like Girl Talk and the Bran Flakes, who provide a sort of postmodern

pastiche of sounds meant to reflect the elasticity and concurrence of all music. Whatever. They don't do it like the Boys and the Dust Brothers (also known for producing another genre-bending masterpiece, Beck's 1996 album "Odelay"), whose love for all things harmonious shines clear on all of these tracks, but it doesn't seem overly cutesy or forced or like a commentary on anything. It's just about wanting to employ as many separate elements as possible, almost playing a game with the listener and the artist to see just how much pop culture (and beyond) can not just fit together, but somehow find a comfortable, cohesive whole. DJ Shadow, DJ Qbert and all those other sample-heavy dudes and dudettes have nothing on these guys.

But good beats can comprise only half (or, at best, 90 percent) of a solid rap album. There must be something to the MC(s), be it flow, storytelling or an element of surprise (a la Lil Wayne). Luckily, the Beastie Boys have all three and are at the peak of not just their lyrical dexterity but also their sheer energy: there's an excitement here that has more depth than that of their first album, "Licensed to Ill," but isn't diluted like it is on 1991's overburdened albeit brilliant effort "Check Your Head."

There are many reasons why the Beastie Boys' sophomore album has been canonized by music critics almost universally, and they've all been enumerated by the same ridiculous quantity of reviewers, critics, bloggers and the like ad nauseum. So why write about "Paul's Boutique," a record that is being discussed again because of an arbitrary anniversary only celebrated by a big corporation out to make a few more bucks off a work of art? Well, there are two answers, one of which is infinitely more satisfying: One, a great piece of art is that which both reflects its own time and stands up to the test of subsequent generations of critics and two, why the hell not? It's a great record, one in which everyone can find something they enjoy, one of the few truly universal albums of 1989 or any year.

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