

concert preview	10
album reviews	11
film review	12
calendar	14

Concert
Preview:
Cesoria
Evora

see page 10

Film review:
'Resurrection'
is moving
documentary

see page 12

UCSD alums 'Trade Off' academia for film

isn't merely an Asian-American film, but one that appeals to all audiences. Two of the film's principal cast members, UCSD alumni Deyyika Singh and Anup Sugunan, recall their experiences working on their first feature film and offer their advice.

Guardian: How does "Trade Off" compare to other Indian-American films like "Monsoon Wedding" or "Bend It Like Beckham"?

Anup Sugunan: Well, just budget-wise, they had a lot more money than we had. Their movies were made with millions of dollars and ours is very low budget. It's all made with first-time actors and crew. Even the director, had never set foot on a movie set before. It was his first time. But in terms of passion that comes from that first time you do something, you give it all you've got without money or returns. That's what allowed us to come this far.

Deyyika Singh: I would agree with Anup in terms of how it's not entirely made by professionals in the field who specialize in acting or directing or anything like that. It's just like a couple of friends deciding to make a movie. I know the director really well and I've worked with him onstage as an actor. Basically, one day he said to us, "Hey you guys, I want to make a movie," and we just laughed at him. We realized he was serious and started writing the script and it came so far.

A.S.: But the end result is we hired a few key personnel who were experienced and that got us the look of a polished film.

G: It must be amazing to see your movie take off like this.

D.S.: Unexpected. We never expected it to reach this far.

A.S.: Yeah we saw the trailer first and she calls me up [and says], "Did you see the trailer?" [laughs]

D.S.: It's amazing! One of the things that the director did was that he didn't show the

When movies by Indian filmmakers are mentioned, images of Bollywood, people flirting in song behind trees and romances like "Monsoon Wedding" come to mind. But first-time director Vikram Yashpal's new film "Trade Off" delivers suspense, drama, romance and everything necessary in a good film. Yashpal's critically-acclaimed film was shown at the San Diego Asian Film Festival to sold-out audiences and still continues to win accolades at film festivals across the country. Shot entirely in San Diego with UCSD alumni, "Trade Off"

actors what he shot. So when we were shooting, we didn't see anything. We didn't see a single shot until it was all done.

A.S.: Yeah, he kicked me out of the editing room.

D.S.: The trailer was the first time we saw ourselves on the screen and we were like, "Oh my god, how did you make us look like that?" [laughs] It was really amazing.

G: How did you get involved in this project?

A.S.: I was a programmer at the SDAFF in 2001 and they had a radio show — the director and one of the other producers. I was on the radio show with a couple of other filmmakers and they knew I was interested in film, but I had never made a film. They knew I was into music so they asked me to compose for them, but I said, "I want to act! Let me audition and if I get it, I get it."

G: It seems, from the trailer, that culture is a really important part of the film, as with other Indian-American films.

D.S.: The culture is not a big part of the movie. They're just Indians, but honestly they could be anyone else. If you replaced the characters with people from Tennessee, the story would still make sense. The sari that you see in a dream sequence and it's the only time that you see her [character Sapna] in a sari. See, the story is about the transition of getting married and getting to know each other's personalities.

G: Was it a great experience to be involved in something like this?

A.S.: Totally!

D.S.: Incredible [laughs]. It was so awesome. Probably one of the coolest of my life so far, and I'm not exaggerating.

What made it so cool was that it was this unbelievable, extraordinary situation that was created and how much fun it was. Imagine most of the cast, 50-plus people and most of them are not getting paid — OK, 97 percent — and we shot for two months, every weekend. Saturday morning we would meet at 5 a.m. to get our make-up done. We'd be in the director's

garage getting our make-up done, our hair done, preparing.

Fifty people show up at this

place, everybody

on time, and we shoot

until 10 p.m. at night. And

then Sunday morning, we're up there again. And it was so unbelievably fun. It wasn't like we were being forced to go to a job. Everybody wanted to be there.

A.S.: We couldn't wait for the weekend! It took us 20 days to shoot it and the whole thing was shot in San



Courtesy of Kasha Films

By
Anne
Cong-Huyen
Hiatus Editor

See **TRADE OFFS**, Page 11

Love, death and playwrighting collide in 'Seagull'

Chekhov's classic offers hotbed of emotion in slick new production

By **BRIAN UIGA**
Staff Writer

So, you want a fun night out at the theater, huh? Something to uplift and inspire, right? Well, stay home! "The Seagull" is a convoluted foray into the personal demons of 11 people living in rural Russia. It's depressing, moody, and the audience spends more than half of its two-and-a-half hours watching people sitting down and complaining about their lives — and it's fabulous.

Written by noted Russian playwright and author Anton Chekhov, "The Seagull" explores the story of the young playwright Konstantin, played by Geno Monteiro, and his quasi-love Nina, spunkily played by Christine Albright.

Of course, things being what they are, this is an unrequited love. It isn't helped in the slightest by the fact that Nina has fallen in love with Konstantin's stepfather Trigorin (played with considerable virtue by Owiso Odera), a successful playwright who represents everything Konstantin despises about the world. The Oedipal conflict just wouldn't be complete without Konstantin's continual struggle to gain the respect of his mother Arkadina, a wax figure of an actress, played with a surprising amount of gusto by Lisa Velten.

Completing this theme of loneliness and unrequited love are several more couples who run circles around each other (never figuring out what they want), and a dying man (Jose Chavarry) who regrets pretty much everything in his life.

From this labyrinthine plot, Chekhov spins a web of dialogue that is part gut-wrenching drama and part laugh-out-loud comedy of manners. All of the well-rounded characters bounce off each other marvelously and each of the performers does a stellar job of



Courtesy UCSD Department of Theatre

White love: "The Seagull" features loneliness and unrequited love with dramatic yet humorous dialogue.

finding the humor apparent in the style and rhythm of their characters.

For the more dramatic second half, however, the adage "less is more" seems to have been ignored in terms of acting. While the humor continues to be subdued and realistic, several "tear-jerker" mono-

See **SEAGULL**, Page 13

Death Cab for Cutie, Nada Surf take the stage at the Scene

Two weeks to closing, the Scene brings a great indie-pop show to San Diego

By **JESSICA LINGEL**
Senior Staff Writer

Death Cab for Cutie albums have been a staple in the collection of any emo or indie fan since the 1998 release of *Something About Airplanes* on Barsuk Records. With the additions of a few EPs, its phenomenally successful *The Photo Album* and its most recent record, *Transatlanticism*, Death Cab for Cutie has every reason to expect an admiring and dedicated crowd on its current tour, which will be hitting San Diego on Nov. 16 at the Scene.

Taking the stage with Mates of State, fellow label-mates Nada Surf and The Long Winters, Death Cab has a lot to celebrate on the current tour, promoting the new album that has won praise from sources as disparate as Playboy, Spin and Billboard.

The four-piece band consists of Benjamin Gibbard (vocals), Christopher Walla (guitars), Nicholas Harmer (bass) and Jason McGerr (drums), and the perfor-

mance at The Scene will feature openers Nada Surf. The show comes just two weeks before the venue closes its doors on Nov. 30. Death Cab's tour will be wrapping up in Seattle at about the same time.

Attendants to the concert won't be disappointed. On the band's fourth full-length, Gibbard's lyrics are wistful metaphors that have won fans since his first album. Gibbard's brilliance is based on his focus on life's smallest details as grounds for lyrical metaphors.

Keeping true to that kind of genius, the new album should manage to placate old fans and generate some new ones. Retaining the quiet simplicity of 2000's *We Have the Facts and We're Voicing Yes* while continuing to hone the lush sound combinations found on 2001's *The Photo Album*, *Transatlanticism* is a brilliant mix of the melancholy vibes and naked honesty that has come to mark Death Cab's style. Older fans may

See **CUTIE**, Page 12

album  reviews



Various Artists
Lost in Translation
Emperor Norton

★★★★

Those who remember Sofia Coppola's "The Virgin Suicides" will remember the stellar soundtrack by French duo Air. Staying true to form, Coppola once again puts together an incredibly haunting, ethereal soundtrack to accompany her film "Lost in Translation."

Featuring tracks from the long-awaited return of My Bloody Valentine and frontman Kevin Shields, the Jesus and Mary Chain, and Phoenix and Air, this album combines shoegazer classics with excellent newcomers. It's hard to pick which tracks are outstanding because each evokes

such strong feelings in its own way. Tracks such as Sebastian Telier's dreamy "Fantino" and "Girls" by Death in Vegas will leave you with a sense of wonderment and are a great contrast to My Bloody Valentine's guitar-driven "Sometimes."

This album will take you far away from sunny San Diego and on a trip to the heart of the Ginza and Shinjuku districts of Tokyo, where it's likely you'll feel just as misplaced as the two characters in the movie.

— Sarah Mak
Contributing Writer



Spiritualized
Amazing Grace
Sanctuary

★★★

"This little life of mine, I'm gonna let it slide." So begins Spaceman's fifth space-rock epic under the name Spiritualized. Like his previous music, including that of his legendary drone-rock band Spaceman 3, Spaceman's lyrics focus on drugs, girls, sin, salvation and more drugs over a haze of heavily distorted guitars and dense orchestration, complete with gospel choirs. With two seminal bands

and at least one Spiritualized masterpiece under his belt (the gorgeous *Ladies and Gentlemen, We are Floating in Space*), Spaceman sounds free to follow his muse on *Amazing Grace*. It opens with a pair of Stooge-inspired rockers, complete with the kind of snaking basslines currently making Black Rebel Motorcycle Club popular. The all-too-clever drug reference of "She Kissed Me (It Felt Like a Hit)" doesn't obscure

a wonderfully droning song. Even better is the thumping "Cheapster," which disrupts the trance-like nature of the album.

Strangely enough, when Spiritualized latches onto the garage-rock trend, *Amazing Grace* shines. The forays into orchestral rock aren't nearly as distinctive as older ballads, save for the gently crafted downer "The Ballad of Richie Lee." The fluctuation of paces and volume throughout makes the album feel like a dream broken by constant waking, but it's an enticing dream nonetheless.

Spiritualized plays at 4th & B on Nov. 15 with openers Soledad Brothers.

— Billy Gil
Associate Hiatus Editor



Leona Naess
Leona Naess
Geffen Records

★★★

Do you crave more Norah Jones? Do you think listening to music is too much work? Do you just want to relax, paint your toenails and talk about Josh Hartnett?

If you answered "yes" to

any of these questions, Leona Naess has just the album for you. Her self-titled record reminds listeners that pop music can be completely girly, simple and edgeless. This innocuous album will not get on your nerves, nor will it get

into your veins; it's too risk-free to be addictive.

Naess is dangerously reminiscent of the fledgling favorite on last year's pop scene, Norah Jones. The record is catchy for a little while, but this wears off fast. If you crave jazzy vocals and mellow melodies, you'd be much better off with Natalie Cole or Ella Fitzgerald.

Naess opens for Josh Rouse at the Casbah on Nov. 16.

— Kate Leiserson
Contributing Writer

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Trade Offs: Optimism helped project

continued from page 9

Diego. We shot at the airport, at the Solana Beach train station, at the beaches, the Torrey Pines cliffs.

D.S.: Everyone that was involved in the project was so helpful, even the film commission. They didn't just help but they were passionately involved. It was all Vikram. He was so enthusiastic with everyone he talked to, he just enrolled them in the project. He was so unrealistically optimistic that it rubbed off on the entire cast.

Deypika Singh graduated with a degree

in cognitive science from UCSD in 2001 and is currently working as a usability specialist for Macromedia, but said, "I would leave my job for an awesome role. I'm looking for exceptional."

Anup Sugunan graduated from UCSD in 1997 with a degree in physiology and neuroscience and is obviously not working in his field of study. His last project was "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" with Russel Crowe, where he plays a mercenary.

For more information on the film "Trade Offs," visit <http://www.tradeoff-tbmovie.com>.

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