

Singin' in the Rain

Gregory Maddock, Sophomore

It's not every Vocal Jazz Ensemble that spends their weekend camping in the cold, wind and rain. Recently, the Lyons Vocal Jazz Ensemble, or LVJE, did just that.

Directed by Mr. Wlodarczyk, the LVJE is made up of a select group of students who auditioned last June. This year's LVJE includes sopranos Alicia Sieling (12), Johanna Stoep (12), Chanel Brown (11), and Paige Durham (9); altos Kristen Williams (12), Rebecca Wallis (11), Stacie Detorio (11), and Emily Stoep (9); tenors Darius Greene (11) and Greg Maddock (10); and basses David Cheney (12) and Brian Sieling (9). Accompanying the ensemble on the bass guitar is Tiffany Graham (10) and on the drum set, Olivia Maddock (9).

The weekend of October 15th and 16th, the LVJE spent the night at the Cheerful Valley Campgrounds. The weekend included pitching tents, cooking meals on the campfire, playing games and other activities, and, of course, singing. The first night ended with thought-provoking questions and s'mores around the campfire. Luckily, everyone was in his or her tent for the night when it started to rain!

The purpose of the weekend was not only to improve their singing and performance quality, but also to develop a special bond within the ensemble. The weekend proved successful.

The LVJE performs at every choral concert. At the concert on Tuesday, October 25, the LVJE performed "Taking a Chance on Love" and "Java Jive". The next performance for the LVJE will be at the Winter Choral Concert.

How Bad Do You Want It?

by: julie oehme

How bad should you want Tim McGraw's latest work of art? The opening track *How Bad Do You Want It?* sets the mood for what is a classic, and what, for me, was an unexpected journey back to what can be considered a more typical country sound than his last album. As a true Tim McGraw fan, I will be the first to admit that it took several good listens to this album before I warmed up to it. But, McGraw has yet again managed to give his fans a collection of humor and heart wrench that you can't help but want to listen to again and again.

Having viewed McGraw's last album, *Tim McGraw and the Dancehall Doctors*, as having a sound more appealing to the masses while managing to uphold the fundamentals of country music, I feel *Live Like...* is an album that will appeal more to the true country music fan verses a "cross over" fan, with tracks like *Do You Want Fries With That* and *Back When*. It is in finding the fun and intended humor in songs such as these that allow for virtually anyone to appreciate them in some way.

What makes McGraw such a phenomenal performer, country fan or not, is his ability to take a simple lyrical composition and, in the delivery of it, burn it beautifully into your memory before you even realize what's happened to you. *Blank Sheet of Paper* and *My Old Friend* are both simple songs that McGraw makes warm and memorable and are tracks that you will play over and over again.

I am giving this album a 3 out of 5, not because it isn't a solid collection of songs, but because it does not match the magnitude of appeal and longevity of his last album.

Band Review

This was going to be a CD review of **Deady's** latest release *Commencement*, but I found the band quite interesting and couldn't help but praise them in every aspect. First, I'll give you a brief history on these guys:

Formed in 1995, they wrote most of their songs in that time period. Between then and 1999, two albums were made but never released. Finally, in 2002, they released the phenomenally well-made CD *Commencement*. Their music video for *The Key To Gramercy Park* was shown on MTV shortly thereafter. Their longtime bassist, "The Beast" Craig, left the band and was replaced by their current bassist, Craig Riker, AKA Creature. Deadsy is currently signed with Dreamworks/Elementree Records.

Deadsy's genre is called Undercore, a word the lead singer Elijah Blue devised to represent the band's musical style and form of operation. His definition of Undercore is: A low, dissonant sound with a fierce commitment to excellence. As far as that's concerned, they've done a superb job at keeping up that title. So then, you know their genre; now, let's move on to their instruments.

The musicians themselves are incredibly talented. Carlton Megalodon, one of the band's guitarists, plays a type of synth guitar called a Z-Tar. I actually had to look it up to understand exactly what it was. A common synth guitar looks basically like a keyboard with a neck. There are synth adapters that you can attach to a normal electric guitar as well – my father has one on his Schecter. Megalodon's Z-Tar produces a sound that is very hard to explain in words. The normal guitar sound undermines an electronic enhancement that almost gives it a Nine Inch Nails industrial sound.



Ren Hawkey, AKA Dr. Nner, is on the synthesizers. More specifically, a very tall keyboard set. If I remember correctly, it kind of looks like one of those foldout tackle boxes, three shelves that can fold down and such. I do believe he has four instead of three, but I am going by memory. When teamed up with Megalodon, Dr. Nner can create an insane barrage of those ping-pong synth notes I so praised in my last review of *Mindless Self Indulgence*. His keyboard work consists of high pitched, wavering notes that can last up to thirty seconds. Alone, this would be annoying, but when weaved into the drums, guitar, Z-tar, and bass, it creates a mesmerizing melody that you have to hear to truly understand what I am saying.

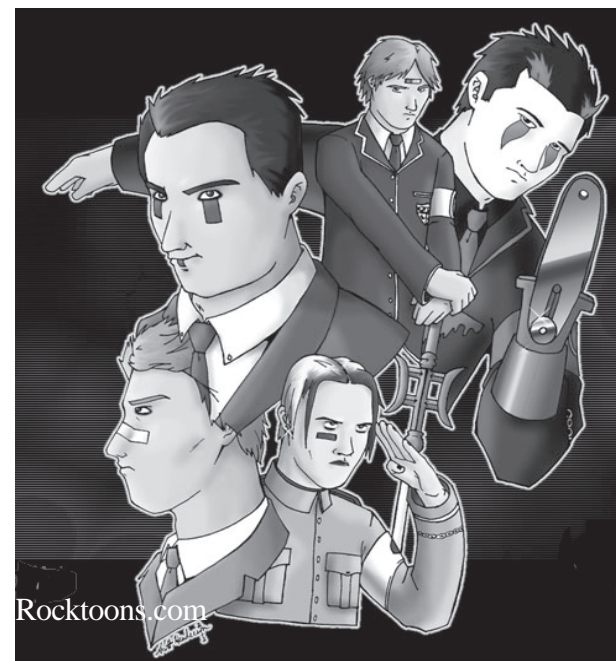
Craig Riker, AKA Creature, occupies the Bass guitar in outstanding performances. He basically adds the "oomph" factor to the synth instruments played by Megalodon and Dr. Nner. Alex Puro, AKA Alec Pure, delivers a fantastic performance on drums. From slow, rhythmic beats to insanely fast mayhem, Alec Pure is up in the ranks of Danny Carey (Tool) and Joey Jordison (Slipknot). And lastly, their vocalist/guitarist Elijah Blue, a mysterious, enchanting man whose intelligence is very well reflected in the beautiful lyrics he writes. AKA Phillips Exeter Blue, his voice is somewhat Manson-esque.

By now I'm sure you're wondering why they all have nicknames. Or maybe you're not, but it doesn't matter; I'm telling you anyway. Each member represents an Entity, and has their own symbol. For instance, Exeter's symbol is a Blue Book, Alec's is a Tennis Ball, Creature's is the Hockey Mask, Dr. Nner's is the Medical Staff, and the Shark Jaws are for Megalodon. All this is based on the band's collective theory that humanity is driven by a force that is divided into five distinct parts. Such entities are Academia (Exeter), Science/Medicine (Nner), Leisure (Alec), War (Megalodon), and Horror (Creature).

All of this personifies what Exeter calls a 'Concept band', "*A band which incorporates imagery, philosophies, complicated systems, and deeper meanings into their art. If you 'get' the band, it's a lot easier to enjoy.*" (Quote from a fan that really knows Deadsy to the point of being creepy)

Commencement is phenomenal, and they have a second CD on the way called *Phantasmagoria*. Deadsy gets bonus points for naming an album after my favorite word. For those who don't know the word: poet Edgar Allen Poe commonly used Phantasmagoria, and its two variations, Phantasmagorian and Phantasmagore. Its basic meaning is a barrage of surreal, dreamlike images. I don't know why it's my favorite word; I guess it's just fun to say.

Overall, Deadsy's sound is one of a kind. Although the band name sounds like they're a heavy group, most of their songs have beautiful melodies (especially *Winners*, *Brand New Love*, and *Mansion World*). The combined forces of the lyrics and the music creates a somewhat surreal state of mind that invokes a happy emotion that stays with you for the rest of the day.



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