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CD Review

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From the Town of Bedrock ...

To most Americans, Jurassic Park was a too-realistic, barebones Michael Crichton novel that Steven Spielberg envisaged into a sensational thriller and the year's highest-grossing film. Even those among us who can't tell a strand of DNA from a spiral staircase left the theater with shaky knees, white knuckles, and a speck of curiosity: could any of that actually happen?

In his lecture at ISU, "Amber, DNA and Dinosaurs: Can Jurassic Park be real?" George Poinar, professor of entomological sciences at the University of California at Berkeley, tried to answer some of the questions that the book and movie have raised: How advanced are present amber-studying capabilities? How realistic and scientifically plausible is Jurassic Park? And is the resurrection of extinct species really possible, now or in the future?

The premise on which Jurassic Park is based—that scientists can bring organisms out of extinction by cloning fossilized DNA from specimens in amber—is out of reach, Poinar said. Present technology is not capable of bringing back extinct organisms. As for the future, he said, "it's very difficult to say," he said. "It depends on how far and how fast scientific advancements can be made."

Poinar is what you might call an amber expert. His two books, Life in Amber and Quest for Life in Amber, detail his extensive knowledge concerning one of science's most valuable windows into extinct species. Amber is the fossilized resin produced by certain kinds of trees; it is insoluble in water and therefore very durable. Several deposits of amber worldwide have yielded countless fossils of everything from pollen and feathers to cockroaches and frogs.

Poinar and his wife, Roberta, were pioneers in their field when, in 1982, they performed a study on an amber fossil with an electron microscope and found intact cell parts. Their son later developed a method of breaking open the amber to extract DNA, which they successfully did on a bee. Their expertise and study in the field led to their involvement as advisers to the book Jurassic Park.

Professor Poinar pointed out a few inconsistencies between the movie and real life. In the movie, the mosquito in amber from which the scientists extracted DNA was reported to be from the Dominican Republic, which would make it between 40 and 45 million years old, a full 20 million years after dinosaurs became extinct. In addition, in real life, no amber from the Jurassic period contains insects, nor did dinosaurs exist during that period; they thrived in the Cretaceous period. "I guess Jurassic Park just sounds sexier than Cretaceous Park," he said.

Reality Bites

Original Soundtrack

Alright, ladies, the question of the day is this does hearing "All I Want Is You" make you want to have carnal knowledge of Bono or what? Me, too. That's just one of the many highlights on this delectable CD. Reality Bites is a groovy mix of '70s and '90s. Even though I was in my Garanimals when "My Sharona" was released, I still dig it.

You're bound to love something from Reality Bites: The Indians, Lenny Kravitz, Dinosaur Jr. and yet another remake of "Baby I Love Your Way." Yeehaw, The Juliana Hatfield Three sing "Spin the Bottle" and it is, dare I say, cute and funny. "Tempried" by Squeeze makes you want to get up and dance. And you can impress all your friends by learning all the words. I'm still working on it.

This is my advice to you: See this movie. Live it, love it. Then get this disc, because it will mean more to you after feasting on the delights of Ethan Hawke for two hours. Now get out of that den of slack of yours and locomote.

Tori Amos

Under the Pink

There is something about that Tori Amos that I like. Is it the voice? Totally. Her amazing piano skills? Definitely. The rats that crawl all over her in the "God" video? No!

Tori Amos' music is amazing! She can sound like a little girl one minute and a raging lunatic the next. You've got to appreciate that.

Her lyrics are hilarious. For example, in "The Waitress," she yells, "I believe in peace, bitch!" Ha!

Anyway, this was my first experience with Tori, the first of many. I'm sure. It was completely enjoyable.

P.S. I dig her red hair.

Pavement

Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain

Can you say "Replacements," boys and girls? If you close your eyes while listening to Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain, you can just see Paul Westerberg, clad in flannel.

"Cut Your Hair" is a cute little ditty. And the video is full of delightful boys. My life is full. In fact, this CD is great all the way around. It's kind of mellow in a sit-around-with-your-friends-and-chill kind of way, not in a sappy way at all. Be sure to catch "Range Life" for a total slam against Smashing Pumpkins. You can just feel the tension.

I really like Pavement; I walk on it all the time. (Sorry, sometimes the spirit of John Ritter takes over my mind.) Anyway, Pavement is way cool. When I compare them to The Replacements, it is with total adoration.

Sarah Wolf

Carolyn Post