Costumes by Computer

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Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol1995/iss1/4

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Sinister Dane

Angst has a new name in the Midwest—Sinister Dane. Rage manifests itself in this biracial quartet from St. Louis, Mo., and they let their intensity shine on their self-titled debut.

The first sound bite on the album, “48 Months,” announces that Sinister Dane has arrived is here to stay. It is pure hard-driving rock from that point on. The band has a sound and a political agenda much like that of Living Colour (R.I.P.). In fact, Dane seems to be the perfect medicine for those Living Colour fans who have lost their purpose in life very recently.

The album is consistently built around loud, grinding guitars and lyrics commenting on issues which range from mistreatment of Vietnam vets (“Where’s My Parade”) to corporate greed (“Thanks for the Show”).

The two best tracks on the album, “Stained Glass” and “Where’s My Parade,” also happen to be the two hardest songs. Dane’s views are presented most poignantly when its intensity—and volume—is a maximum. The album does not maintain this level throughout (not that there’s anything wrong with that). It does slow down in spots, such as on “Absence of Angels,” but the message is still heard.

Sinister Dane had its beginnings way back in 1988. The band began building up a reputation and actually toured with Living Colour during the famous band’s “Biscuit” tour in 1991. Donald “The Duck” Williams (bass) and Matt Martin (drums) are the only two members left from the original Sinister Dane lineup. After many personnel changes, the current lineup was set in 1993, with the missing links filled in by Joe Sears (vocals) and Jay Summers (guitar).

I had to borrow this CD in order to review it, but I will own it. It is well worth the money. Besides, what’s a couple of days without food when you can experience Sinister Dane? They’re so cool, they’re so cool, they’re so cool.

- Chris Daly

Costumes by Computer

Thanks to a new form of computer technology, Iowa State’s theatre productions this year have been one step ahead of Broadway.

Joseph Kowalski, an Iowa State design professor, is using a new program to design costumes for the stage.

The computer program, which Kowalski has been using for a year, was first used by the United States Theatre of Technology, based in California.

Kowalski first used the program for ISU Theatre’s Pirates of Penzance, and since he has used it to design costumes for Taming of the Shrew and A Woman’s Place, a repertoire of works by fellow faculty member Jane Cox.

In Taming of the Shrew, he took enlarged figures, traced over them, scanned them into the computer and cut and pasted them out.

A Woman’s Place will be performed April 13-15, and Taming of the Shrew will be performed April 20-22. The following week, both productions will be performed on alternate days.

Kowalski said the new technology has yet to make its mark on Broadway, but it has been used in other aspects of productions.

“It has been used for scenic designs for years, but nobody has done anything for costumes,” Kowalski said.

- Shuva Rahim