

Depeche

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buses, the Devotional tour was held at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. Located roughly 20 minutes by train south of central London, the facility is neither crystal nor a palace, but an outdoor track and field stadium which became the sight of a "Depecheplaza." Three opening bands set the tone for the day starting with the hip-hop reggae sounds of Dub Syndicate; rapper styles of Markkan; and the gothic rock rattle of Sisters of Mercy, all in 65-degree weather with \$3 pints of ale. (The The will take over opening slot duties at The Palace.)

By 8:30 p.m. the general admission venue was packed and ready for its savors. Huge gray curtains conceal the enormous stage as random guitar blasts and thunder claps blare and developed into a techno sequence frenzy of "Higher Love."

Frontman David Gahan, whose vocals sound cleaner and fuller than in the past, hid while the 16,000 strong army flung its arms into the evening sky.

When the stage opened, Gahan was dancing in front of a large platform holding three sets of keyboards. One backup singer held position on either side as the unused space above and below the platform provide the location for MTV-type video clips which at times were distracting, but visually complimentary material.

The focus of this tour is the last few releases with songs such as "Never Let Me Down," "Behind The Wheel" and "Stripped"

which the crowd at times drowned out Gahan's vocals. With new material such as "I Feel You" and "In Your Room," the use of guitars and drums add a revolutionary twist to the typical synthesized sound. The addition of live drums by Moder Am Wilder and Martin Gore's improved guitar playing Depeche Mode's material has obtained a more musical substance and tangibility which was lacking in previous performances.

A more confident Gore took control for two songs, this time more sure of his performance and vocal abilities. As burning candle flicker in the black and white video, Gore positions himself on the edge of the stage. Leaning into the audience with open arms for "Jude," he worked his followers like a well-rehearsed preacher.

The big surprise of the evening occurred when a string quartet assembled for "One Crepuscule." As Gore distanced himself from the musicians, the crowd joined, comprising a mass choir.

As a full moon glamed above the ancient European city, the show concluded with disco versions of "Fly on the Wings of Love" and "Everything Counts," leaving Depeche Mode as the rulers of its own synthesizer kingdom.

Depeche Mode and special guest The The will perform at 7:30 p.m. at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Luper Road, Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22-23. The first show is sold out. For more information, call 377-0100 or 645-6666.

McLean

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McLean the performer auditioned for the new troupe along with more than 700 others, making the final 45 who were called back for a second look — but McLean the carpenter left a lasting impression on the place.

"I signed my name on this piece of oak under one of the stairways," McLean said with a laugh. "I know that I worked here before any other comedians did."

In addition to the carpentry and stage work, McLean also works on other comedy related projects in the hopes of making the next jump to national stardom. After all, the table for Detroiters has been set in Hollywood with Tim Allen, Dave Coulier, Thom Sharp and Mike Binder all making their respective pretenses felt. To achieve this end, McLean continues to work on his skills as a writer and actor.

With writing partner Gary George, McLean penned a number of screenplays and an episode of "Seinfeld" (with additional help from best friend Bob Monaghan) which has yet to be sold.

He's also working on a television project with Southfield's Lighten Up Films, the people who

brought us the recent "Let's Kill All the Attorneys." Entitled "Live 'n Kickin'" it is a Detroit ensemble sketch-oriented show in the mold of "Saturday Night Live" or Comedy Central's "Almost Live" which has put Seattle on the map for more than three years. A local television or syndication deal is being negotiated at the present time for the show.

"It's been a great experience," McLean said. "I've learned how to deal with directors, producers and other actors."

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'Concubine,' 'Butterfly' gender bend

By JOHN MONAGHAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Blame it on "Orlando" and "The Crying Game" because I'm getting downright bored with movies about sexual ambiguity and androgyny. I couldn't help but enter two new movies with more than a bit of trepidation.

Chen Kaige's "Farewell My Concubine," which chronicles the relationship of a pair of Chinese actors over 50 years, is fortunately a pleasant surprise. Haunting and often brutal, the highly melodramatic epic personifies China's turbulent changes during the 20th century.

It plays for the next two weekends at the Detroit Film Theatre. Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolu (Zhang Fengyi) first meet as children in 1925 at an academy that trains young orphans to perform in the Peking Opera. These early scenes have an almost Dickens-like quality as the strict Master Guan beats them regularly as part of their instruction.

The movie begins in a brown-tinted black-and-white. Soon, tones begin to emerge and then full-blown colors fill the screen. It's like old faded photographs

slowly coming to life. Dieyi's problems with sexual identity help him become the country's greatest actor in Peking Opera, which traditionally uses men for the women's roles. It also causes tension with partner Xiaolu, especially when the lusty bachelorette gets carried into marriage.

Gong Li, the beautiful actress from "Raise the Red Lantern" and other recent Chinese epics, plays Yoko Ono to the men's Beatles. She shyly convinces Xiaolu to keep a drunken promise of marriage then badgers him to leave the Peking Opera forever.

She has some help from history when China is invaded by the Japanese during World War II and later turns Communist. There's no place for such bourgeois entertainment during the ironically titled Cultural Revolution and the actors are used as whipping boys by the government.

"Farewell My Concubine" shared first place at Cannes earlier this year with Jane Campion's "The Piano." Although not a masterpiece, it has stunning cinematography and perhaps the best Peking Opera sequences yet put on film.

MOVIES

You'll appreciate it even more after seeing David Cronenberg's profoundly disappointing "M. Butterfly," currently at the Maple.

If anyone could translate the controversial stage play to the screen, it should be Cronenberg, the Canadian director of "Naked Lunch" and "Dead Ringers," who has long held a fascination with the bizarre. Instead he has fashioned a highly conventional, often dull, story of passion and betrayal that has little of the emotional impact I remember from the play.

Jeremy Irons plays Gallimard, the French diplomat stationed in Beijing in 1964 who falls in love with a beautiful diva after witnessing a performance of Puccini's "Madama Butterfly." He doesn't realize that Song Liling (John Lone) is actually a man.

The fantasy continues for several years until it is revealed in court that Liling has been an ongoing classified informant from Gallimard about American troop movements in Vietnam.

Irons is spectacular, as usual, changing from a wishy-washy ac-

countant to a cocky high-ranking official. His affair gives him the false impression that he knows how the Chinese tick, but "M. Butterfly" tells us that Westerners understand nothing at all about the mysterious Chinese.

John Lone, the title character in "The Last Emperor," makes a physically unconvincing Song Liling. Seeing these films in quick succession, I couldn't help but think back to Leslie Cheung's delicate performance in "Concubine," especially when it comes time to perform on stage.

There are some genuine pleasures in the movie, including the sumptuous cinematography and the dreamy, Bernhard Herrmann-like musical score by Howard Shore, who also collaborated with Cronenberg on "Naked Lunch."

Despite another great performance from Irons, "M. Butterfly" is an eye snoozer.

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, or write him care of Street Scene, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters throughout metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

DETROIT FILM THEATRE
Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2323 for information. (\$5; \$4 students)

"Farewell My Concubine" (China — 1993), 7 and 10 p.m. Oct. 22-23; 1 and 5 p.m. Oct. 24. The film that shared the grand prize at Cannes this year is the sumptuously photographed tale of two traditional Chinese actors and their relationship over the years.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE CAFE
22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call

544-3030 for information. (\$3)
"Drive-In Movie Night — 'Drive-In Blues' (USA — 1986) and 'Wild Wild Planet' (Italy — 1966), starting at 8 p.m. Oct. 21. The first film is a documentary about the rise and fall of the 'pension pit,' with interviews and vintage intermission advertising (dancing hot dogs, etc.). "Planet" is a low-budget Italian sci-fi movie with crazy costumes, robots and sexy aliens who try to take over earth's scientists.

MAIN ART THEATRE
118 N. Main Street at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Call 542-0180 for show times. Titles listed run through Oct. 21. (\$6)
"Especially on Sunday" (Italy

— 1993). Three separate tales of love from the Italian countryside, one directed by "Cinema Paradiso's" Giuseppe Tornatore. "Like Water for Chocolate" (Mexico — 1992). The surreal story of a woman whose passion is expressed through her elaborate meals.

"Bad Behaviour" (Britain — 1993). The everyday triumphs and troubles of life in middle-class London, starring Stephen Rea ("The Crying Game") and Sinéad Cusack.

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