

ARTS OVERLOAD

Breaking down the upcoming semester in arts and theater

ARTS PREVIEW | PAGE 4C



SEEING BEYOND *THE DARK*

Diversions is here to remind you there was more to summer than *The Dark Knight*

SUMMER RECAP | PAGE 2C



Diversions

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE:

Death Race offers a surprisingly satirical look at modern culture. For our review of the movie, which came out at the tail end of summer, just click the Diversions link at www.diamondbackonline.com.

TV ON THE INTERNET



Webisodes offer a glimpse of television's future

BY THOMAS FLOYD
Senior staff writer

When Annemarie Pazmino wakes up in the morning, she has script changes ready to go. She talks with her director and castmates, shoots her scenes for the day and heads back to the hotel, getting some sleep before doing it all over again.

A typical day in the life of a television actress. Yet Pazmino's show, *Sorority Forever*, will never hit the network airwaves — her

audience is in the ever-emerging world of webisodes.

"I don't think there is much difference between making a webisode series versus making a TV series," Pazmino said. "The production value is still up there, and the amount of effort and the amount of time and the research — it's all still there. It's a different kind of story, and webisodes seem to be the way the industry is moving toward."

After the network disbanded in 2006, The WB returned Aug. 27, pegged as an exclu-

sively online entity. Featuring access to classic series, such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Gilmore Girls*, in addition to new scripted material, like *Sorority Forever*, theWB.com launched with the tagline, "The next great network won't be televised."

Warner Bros., however, is far from the only business caught in television's transition to online. EQAL, the innovative company behind the video blog drama, *lonelygirl15*, is still dis-

Please See WEBISODES, Page 5

REVIEW | BRIAN WILSON

That Lucky Old *dude*

Former Beach Boy is still smiling after all these years

BY ZACHARY HERRMANN
Senior staff writer

In case anyone forgot the long-standing genius of *Pet Sounds* — quite possibly the greatest American album — Brian Wilson just had to outdo himself. Thirty-seven years after the *SMiLE* sessions helped undo the mad scientist behind The Beach Boys, Wilson re-recorded and finished the once-lost album in 2004.

The result is as well-reviewed a masterpiece as any song cycle to wash up on the shores of the Internet age.

Granted, the material was written during Wilson's (and collaborator Van Dyke Parks's) creative peak. But after beholding the modern miracle of *SMiLE* and its ensuing tour, who could possibly deny Wilson's continuing relevance in and out of the studio?

The latest Wilson/Parks creation (Wilson band member Scott Bennett is also credited), *That Lucky Old Sun*, is a strong testament to Southern California

and the orchestral pop the creators spawned there. Built around the Frankie Lane- and later Louis Armstrong-popularized song of the same name, the album sets the bar fairly high for Wilson's post-*SMiLE* output.

Taking a page out of the book of other aging rockers, Wilson has his own response to the Internet age: releasing *Old Sun* as a limited-time free stream through *USA Today's* website before its official release.

Though the method is worth griping over (pandering to the *People* magazine of national newspapers does not constitute an innovative release platform), judged on purely musical merits, Wilson's most recent effort offers his best material written after The Beach Boys' *Love You*.

Miraculously, through his foggy years of near-psychosis and overmedication, Wilson hasn't lost one ounce of the wide-eyed innocence fueling what he once described as "teenage symphonies to God." Brimming with sun-soaked reverence for all things SoCal, the Wilson/Parks compo-

sitions fondly look back on all the two artists have accomplished.

"Forever She'll be My Surfer Girl" appears to intentionally recall the past Beach Boys hit. The naive professions of love in the summer of '61 sound a bit jarring coming from the much-aged Wilson (66 years old), but he's no less sincere for the time passed.

You don't have to subscribe to Wilson's unbridled optimism on *Old Sun* to be carried away by his bright pop perfectionism. His finest works were always tinged with darkness: "God Only Knows" does open with the qualifying statement, "I may not always love you." Although Wilson confronts some of his former demons on "Midnight's Another Day" ("All these people/ Make me feel so alone"), everywhere else *Old Sun* is a strictly bright affair.

The sugary pop of "Good Kind of Love" may actually stray closer to The Partridge Family than Wilson's former outfit. "California Role" sends one out to all the would-be Hollywood types, albeit without



Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks team up again for Wilson's first post-*SMiLE* album. COURTESY OF GDBEV/BUZZNET.COM

the dingy motel hang-ups, and on "Oxygen To The Brain" Wilson declares, "I'm filling up my lungs again," without nailing a breath of Los Angeles smog.

It seems only fitting, that after drowning in so much despair, Wilson should be all smiles in writing the latter chapters of his legacy. *Old Sun* is the happy ending no one could have predicted 20 or 30 years ago or even the impossible follow-up four years after the completion of his loftiest musical undertaking.

Yet there's plenty for the cynics to jump on. The spoken word interludes are unde-

niably corny ("Venice Beach is popping/ Like live shrimp dropped on a hot wok"...), despite preserving the album's flow. "Mexican Girl" and "Narrative: Cinco de Mayo" are not exactly culturally informed by today's standards, but these nitpicky detractors are simply what separates *Old Sun* from its brilliant predecessor.

Let Mike Love parade around casinos and boardwalks with The Beach Boys name all he likes — Wilson is the only true Beach Boy still carrying the flag.

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ALBUM: That Lucky Old Sun | VERDICT: ★★★★★