No signs of intelligent life found in ‘Mission to Mars’

Jamie Schulz
Well everyone’s seen it already…

MPAA Rating: PG
Starring: Gary Sinise, Tim Robbins, Don Cheadle, Jerry O’Connell, Connie Nielsen
Director: Brian De Palma
Studio: Touchstone Pictures
Running Time: 113 minutes
Rating: ★★★

One of the guys I went to the movie theater with overheard an usher say to another while we were leaving the theater “Boy, the movie must be bad. No one is talking about it.” Well, you got that right, Chuckie.

The premise behind Mission to Mars is a good one—get some good actors to try to cultivate Mars, then have bad things start to happen. However, premise and execution of an idea are two different things.

The movie begins with what the usual mission-to-outerverse-space movie has placed in the middle: the big farewell party. Argh. We have sit through twenty minutes of goodbyes, I love you, I’ll miss you. Blah blah blah. And it doesn’t end there. The movie just drips of sentimentality. We’re constantly reminded of Jim McConnell’s (Sinise) dead wife, Maggie (Kim Delaney), who is given credit for beginning the whole concept of exploring Mars with the intention of inhabiting it. (So we have her to thank for the movie.) But anyway, back to the sentimentality and dead wife thing. In addition to being constantly reminded of Maggie, we have to sit through ten minutes of McConnell watching videos of her while he is going to Mars. Please! If I want home videos, I’ll go to a family reunion.

There’s also the whole thing between Woody Blake (Robbins) and his wife, Terri Fisher (Nielson), who seem to be trying to get the love back into their relationship. We finally witness it in a very 2001-ish scene set in the rotating commons area of the Mars station.

Which brings up another point—the movie borrows very heavily from other movies. As I’ve mentioned, it uses the 2001 rotating-thing, and it also relies on Mars being a sort of HAL-like planet. When Luke Graham (Chadle) and the first team try to set radar at a very mysterious shape, a whirlwind appears and eats up everyone, save Luke. See Mission to Mars, page 26.

The premise behind Mission to Mars is a good one. However, premise and execution of an idea are two different things.

‘Planet’ is hospitable, hilarious

By Guo Ramage, JV
What planet am I from?

MPAA Rating: R
Starring: Gary Shandling, Annette Bening, Greg Kinnear, Ben Kingsley, Linda Fiorentino, John Goodman
Director: Mike Nussbaum
Studio: Columbia Pictures
Running Time: 1:1 minutes
Rating: ★★★★

Director Mike Nichols (The Graduate, Primary Colors) has really delivered a great film in What Planet Are You From? It is one of the best romantic comedies since Notting Hill. I was laughing most of the way through the movie and thought it was a great. I was expecting this film to be something along the lines of “Men Are From Mars, Women are from Venus,” but it is actually far from it. This is a great film to take a date to.

The year is 1999. Gary Shandling plays Harold Anderson, an alien who must mate and produce a child in order to save his planet. There are no females on his world, and the only way they reproduce is through cloning. Harold and others are given training on how to talk to Earth women and lure them into bed. Some of the pickup lines are very funny, and will likely be repeated on campus.

When he arrives on Earth, Harold meets Perry Gordon (Greg Kinnear), a co-worker at the bank. Perry shows him how to meet women at 12-step groups and other locations. After encounters with a stewardess, rap-university waitress, and Perry’s wife (Linda Fiorentino), Harold finally meets Susan Hart (Annette Bening) at a meeting. Susan is a recovering

[Shandling] delivers hilarious dialogue while still conveying a message about the way men and women view dating and relationships.

Orbit gives classics a new twist

By Paul Egas
Floating through a serene sky

Artist: William Orbit
Album: Pieces in a Modern Style
Studio: Maverick Records
Tracks: 11
Running Time: 60:10
Genre: Ambient
Rating: ★★★★

William Orbit has been getting a lot of press lately. He is the one that is credited with remaking Madonna. Orbit, along with Madonna, received two Grammys in 1998 (for “Best Pop Album” as well as “Dance Recording”) for his work on Ray of Light. For those of you who are accustom to his work on Ray of Light, you are in for something different with his new album, Pieces in a Modern Style.

This latest effort shows exactly why he is called England’s finest ambient-house pioneer. Orbit tackles the classics with this endeavor and reinvents them, as the title suggests, in a modern style. The smooth, synthetic rendering breathes life into the classical pieces, while keeping the original intricacies.

This CD pairs Orbit’s electronic ambitions with the works of classical composers from the past to present. Along with the “classical” classics—pieces by Beethoven, Ravel, Handel and Vivaldi—are early twentieth century pieces by Samuel Barber, John Cage and Pietro Mascagni and two works by contemporary composer, Henryk Gorecki.

William Orbit has been known throughout the music world as much for his music as his production abilities. His Strange Cargo series created quite a stir in the English techno community, which quickly spread throughout the world. It was in this series that Beth Orton gives her debut on lead vocals for the phenomenally popular “Water From A Vine Leaf.” It was Orbit that discovered her and encouraged her to sing. Her other efforts, such as Patamatic, have met with similar success.

Orbit spends almost as much time making his own music as he does working with others. Along with the Madonna’s “Ray of Light,” her forthcoming release, and her single “Beautiful Stranger,” Orbit has produced the likes of Beth Orton, Blur and All Saints.” Pure Shores,” from the recent release, The Beach. He also co-wrote and co-produced the Ricky Martin/Madonna duet, “Cudrado Con Mi Cancion.” William Orbit is equally hailed for his abilities a remaking works, and has done so for Keftwerk, Seal, Prince and Depeche Mode.

Pieces in a Modern Style, however, suffers the curse of most of Orbit’s work; while some pieces stand out, the others are mediocre. The first single, “Adagio for Strings” by
Next, a string of debris strikes the ship occupied by the second (and now rescue) crew, nearly keeping Woody and his crew from getting to Mars in the first place. And so on and so on.

In the beginning of the movie, Jerry O’Connell’s character, Phil Ohlmyer, seems to be too much a copy of Ben Affleck from Armageddon. Then there’s the similarity to Contact when Luke deciphers a code in the signal he picked up from the mysterious Martian “hill” (which turns out to be a really big alien head). He figures that the code is some kind of signature that the Martians are using to identify who or what has landed on Mars to determine if it’s amiable.

The signature is actually a DNA code (Contact—prime numbers; Mission to Mars—DNA. Hmm...), and it’s up to the guys to complete the chain, send the completed signal back to the hill, and unlock the mystery of Mars. Some big mystery—the Martians “seeded” Earth after it was destroyed, meaning we are they, or they are us. I find that a little hard to digest.

And then there’s the product placement. We’ve got Pepsi (Dr. Pepper), Pennzoil, Kawasaki, Isuzu, and of course, Mars, for the M&M DNA chain that Jerry O’Connell constructs which represents his “perfect woman.” Wonder if she’s a blonde? But a Georgia Tech bumper sticker does sneak its way into the flick, so product placement isn’t too bad.

The only reason I hesitate to totally tank the movie is its graphics. The Mars landscape was done wonderfully, as well as the shots of things hurtling through space—the space stations, satellites, Mars ships, planets, Tim Robbins... But all in all, Mission to Mars is a movie to skip.

Barber, is by far the best, and the reworked dance version has already reached the Top 5 in the UK. The fact that the CD also includes a bonus disk with two remixes of this track is an additional treat.

Other good tracks are Handel’s “Xerxes,” Cage’s “In A Landscape” and Beethoven’s “Opus 132.” The other track, and CD as a whole, are good for relaxation but fail to have the draw of the aforementioned tracks. The Vivaldi piece, “Triple Concerto” reminds me of the music usually heard on some kiddie amusement ride. Despite its flaws, William Ørbit’s Pieces in a Modern Style is an interesting endeavor and would make a nice addition to a collection.

Before you ask, no, that is not a typo. Meaning that yes, William Ørbit likes the Ø in his name with the slash through it, just like it’s written.
What are you listening to?

Atlantic’s Morning Radio Review
This Week: 96 Rock

By David Reynolds
Our very own radio guy

Anyone who has lived in Atlanta for the last three years may know that 96 Rock’s morning show has been a revolving door of DJs. From one group to the next, consistency and entertainment were nowhere to be heard. But in the spring of 1999, enter the Regular Guys!

Two men came all the way from California to save the radio station listeners from boredom. The Regular Guys (also known as Larry Wachs and Eric Von Haessler) rescued listeners from fish quizzes and far-too-energetic pop music DJs and supplied Atlanta with ingenious humor and witty dialect.

Von Haessler, who is known for his work with the massage parlor and street bits as Captain Ponytail. He ventures out into the city doing shockingly hilarious activities that most people in their right mind would never consider possible by a thinking human being. Along with Fats the intern, Tom, and Radioboy, the 96 Rock Morning Show crew supply four hours of intelligent, sidesplitting banter that listeners will rapidly find addicting.

But before listening to the Regular Guys and crew, one should be forewarned—the Regular Guys aren’t for the easily offended, uptight, or humorless. Regular activities include strip trivia against Larry and Eric, adult film star guests, and lashing at the general annoyances of society. The Regular Guys show may not be for you, but on the other hand, it might be good for you after all.

The 96 Rock Morning Show supplies hours of intelligent, sidesplitting banter that listeners will rapidly find addicting.

During the remainder of the semester, our intrepid reporter will be reviewing shows of other Atlanta radio stations.

Email any comments to entertainment@technique.gatech.edu.

Next up: The Morning X

Don’t forget your green earplugs!

COTTON CLUB
[532 Luckie St]
[404] 874-1993
3/17-The Skip
3/18-Boollade
3/21-Fu Manchu, Dj Supergroup
3/23-Angry Sidaf
Website: www.cottonclubatl.com

DARE HORSE TAVERN
[816 N. Highland Ave]
[404] 879-3607
3/3-Hanging sanos, Paranoa, Cheap Posits
3/6-Vivo Drama, Maite Featuro,F. Ding Jon Prieser
3/8-McKee Show
3/9-Jason Gurry, Doman Carter, Mark Duplass
3/10-Tommy Thompson Band, Elephant, Impulse Ride

ECHO LOUNGE
[55 Flat Shoals Ave]
[404] 681-3600
3/17-The Gongas Dr, White Lights, Mya Smoke
3/18-Sean Moh, Elliot Sharp
3/20-Zane Gurule, Nakalo, The Go
3/22-Andrew Bird & Band of Fire, Nina Coix & Her Boyfriends, Star Room Boys
3/23-Dead Legs Diamond, Deonna Varango
3/24-Don’t Block
Website: www.echolounge.com/schoolounge

EDDIE'S ATTIC
[5158 N McDonough St]
[404] 577-9796
3/17-Buddy O'Reilly Band
3/18-Michelle Malone, Tammy Fowler
3/19-Jan Smith
3/21-Drew Blixes, John M, Victor Johnson
3/22-Don Henry, Deborah Holland
3/23-Wheat Lucy, Jf, Knight
3/24-John Mayer, Hugh Blumenfeld
Website: www.eddiesattic.com

KROX
[2311 Robson Rd]
[404] 533-7699
Q20-John Paul Jones
Website: www.kroxtv.com/kroxtv_kids.html

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Advice for the masses: if you ever need someone to lie extremely convincingly, contact Becca. Trust me on this one.
By Alan Back
I'm a reporter, not a detective!

Album: The Suicide Machines
Artist: The Suicide Machines
Rating: 3.5

The Suicide Machines (L to R: Dan Lukacinsky, Jason Navarro, Ryan Vandeberghe, Royce Nunley) fall a little short. The group declares its allegiance to punk and charges through only rarely; “Sincerity” and “I Never Promised You a Rose Garden” are the best examples. Imagine the Sex Pistols crossed with the Specials, lose the horns and keys, and you get the idea of what it sounds like. This is the sort of stuff that grew out of the UK second-wave craze in the early 1980s and bad audiences stomping their hearts out. (Vandeberghe inflicts plenty of damage on his kit in the process.)

Skip over “Reasons” unless you want to hear 72 seconds of nearly incoherent screaming about what’s screwed up in today’s society, and leave “The Fade Away” and “Extraordinary” alone. One tries to mix strings with thrashing guitars (and fails badly), while the other develops bad delusions of grandeur. If Ben Folds had tried to write punk, this might be the result—ouch.

What keeps The Suicide Machines from standing out is the fact that a lot of its songs start to bleed into one another before too long, a problem made worse by the speed with which they go flying by. You need to make every minute count if you’re going to play an entire album’s worth of stuff in just over half an hour. The Detroit boys don’t quite get the job done here, but they get plenty of points for trying.

The Suicide Machines will be performing with No Doubt at the Roxy on April 1. If you don’t already have tickets, all we can say is…good luck!
Sonique’s ‘Cry’ more like a whimper

By Michael Epstein

Something about holy Tuesday?

Artist: Sonique
Album: Hear My Cry
Label: Uptown/Universal Records
Genre: Dance
Tracks: 12
Running Time: 51:11
Rating: ★★★

The 90’s were a great time for dance and club music no doubt, and there’s no reason to think that any of that should change in the 00’s (I guess you call them that). Obviously there are an enormous amount of artists in the dance music field, some who are very good and others not worth the disc they’re pressed on. Sonique is yet another artist who can be placed onto the stack of dance music.

Sonique is actually no stranger to the scene—when she was a teenager, she was signed to a record label and released a debut single, “Let Me Hold You,” which became an instant hit in the club scene and on the dance charts. In the early 90’s Sonique had a slew of dance hits. More recently, she has done successful collaborations with artists such as Josh Wink and Gusto. All the while, she has been a world-renowned DJ. Now, she has released her first full album, Hear My Cry, and used all that she has learned so far in an attempt to burst onto the scene.

Her singles from the album, “It Feels So Good” and “I Put A Spell On You,” have already become hits and the album itself went gold in only one week. But, does that really say anything about the quality of the album itself? I can definitely say that I’m layman when it comes to clubs, and not much better in the area of dance music. But I think that I can grow to like pretty much any music. Unfortunately, this album did not fare well. It suffers from a common problem of many dance albums—at some point everything begins to slur together. The album is catchy, but in the end it sounds like something you’d hear playing in Old Navy. That’s not entirely bad, but not entirely good either. You can have too much of a good thing.

The two hit singles, “It Feels So Good” and “I Put A Spell On You”, do little to distinguish from the rest of the tracks on the album. The only tracks that standout on Hear My Cry are the two slow ones, “Drama” and “Hear My Cry”, and ironically, Sonique is not the singer on “Drama”. They’re soft and soothing, and have all the right moves. Everything else is good, but not outstanding. Unless you are a huge dance or club fan, you probably will want to think long and hard before purchasing this disc. Its consistency is not good enough to warrant a full-blown recommendation.
If you’re like the Two Bits Man, you probably don’t think spring break was long enough. One week is hardly enough to really chill out from a busy Georgia Tech life, especially if you have to work during the break like I did...but Two Bits Man...tell the voices in your head to stop complaining about working over the break...eruh. There aren’t any voices in my head. Honest. Anyhoo, given the overabundance of things that I didn’t do, I’m thinking that I should devote this return-to-school edition of Two Bits to things that you should have done over spring break.

One: Go to Florida. Sure I realize that it’s not the most original way to spend a spring break, but nonetheless, it’s a lot of fun. Besides, I respect any state that earns enough sales tax from drunken nudes that they can reduce or eliminate (not sure which) income tax. Besides, Florida is one of the great cultural centers of the United States—how can you deny the greatness of any state that has a park devoted to a talking mouse and thousands of vendors of airbrushed t-shirts, those 15 dollar tributes to kinds of airbrushed t-shirts! Florida is one of the great cultural centers of the U.S.—how can you deny a state that has a park devoted to a talking mouse and thousands of vendors of airbrushed t-shirts, those 15 dollar tributes to Florida rocks my face off.

Two: Don’t go to Florida. Okay, so obviously, you can’t do everything on the list in one spring break, so you might try not going to Florida. This is a great idea if you’re one of those snobby intellectual types who have to always find deeper meaning in everything. “I scorn Florida,” you proclaim as you drive away from the state. “I scorn them all!” This is a great idea if you want your spring break to be exciting, but the sad fact is that many parents let their kids occupy space in bars with screaming four-year-olds and Brittney Spears wannabes.

Three: Have a rousing good time with the telemarketers. If you’re like me, then you find nothing more relaxing on spring break than sleeping late. The only problem is the 10:00 a.m. barrage of calls wanting you to buy timeshare real estate or to subscribe to a certain other newspaper in this city.

Now, many like to act cruelly to the callers, but you have to remember that they are just doing their job, so if you must chew someone out, ask to speak to his/her superior. After all, if there’s one societal demographic that could use a good ole fashioned cussing-out, it’s direct-marketing middle-managers. Now, not being one to waste time, the Two Bits Man doesn’t wait for a superior. Instead, he seeks therapy in a nice chat with the caller in question.

Caller: Hello Mr. Man. I’m Bob from Squeaky Clean Express. We’re going to be in your neighborhood in the next week, and we’d like to offer you reduced-price pressure washing. Could we interest you in a free estimate?

Me: Absolutely, but I have to ask what kind of chemicals you use in your pressure washing. You see, I live in a cardboard box, and some cleaning agents damage the glue. Have you ever tested your service on a corrugated card...<click>

Four: Go bar hopping with eleventh-graders and four-year-olds. Everyone in college knows what a kick it is to have a beer (or eight) at the local pub with a few friends. But just think how exciting it is when there are people there who are half your age! Okay, so it’s not very exciting. In fact, it downright sucks. Nothing is more annoying than trying to socialize with your fellow college students over a backdrop of screaming four-year-olds and Brittney Spears wannabes.

Five: Make heavy-artillery with the sugar-cannon. It’s a little known fact that you can make a deadly gal, maybe she’d be out for revenge. I bet she’d let me get a shirt that reads, “Minnie and Two Bits Man 4Ever.” I’ve said it before; I’ll say it again—Florida rocks my face off.

Two: Don’t go to Florida. Okay, so obviously, you can’t do everything on the list in one spring break, so you might try not going to Florida. This is a great idea if you’re one of those snobby intellectual types who have to always find deeper meaning in everything. “I scorn Florida,” you proclaim as you drive away from the state. “I scorn them all!” This is a great idea if you want your spring break to be exciting, but the sad fact is that many parents let their kids occupy space in bars with screaming four-year-olds and Brittney Spears wannabes.

Nothing is more annoying than trying to socialize with your fellow college students over a backdrop of screaming four-year-olds and Brittney Spears wannabes.

Sound unrealistic? I wish it were, but the sad fact is that many parents let their kids occupy space in bars that could be used for those of us who are old enough. This is particularly upsetting to me now that PETA has published that important press release about how beer is healthier than milk. I hate to think that the underaged are depriving me of my miracle tonic. I actually witnessed this peculiarity over spring break as the now-graduated Two Bits Man of Old and I shared a pitcher with some friends.

Five: Make heavy-artillery with common tabletop goods. It’s a little known fact that you can make a deadly gun with a packet of sugar and a couple drinking straws. While most people attempt to win food fights with juvenile mashed potatoes, people like us need to prove our engineering skill, and that is why the sugar-cannon is such a great invention. Why waste time tossing a spoon of spuds five or six feet when you can squarely nail someone in the head at twenty feet with that time-honored sweetener?

Furthermore, this is a great way to spend time when you’re bar hopping with eleventh-graders and four-year-olds. When a squirt blocks your way, pull out the sugar packet, and watch him flee. Oh, and by the way, the Two Bits man is considerate of those unable to consume sugar as part of their diet—saccharin and aspartame work just peachy as well. Yes, with a little imagination, any spring break can be exciting, even if you can’t manage to escape the Atl. Just remember: If the Two Bits Man hasn’t been arrested yet, then odds are you won’t either. Until next week, I am the Two Bits Man, and these are my thoughts.

Get in touch

5 x 7

Did you notice the space theme of my front page this week? It was unintentional, I swear.