

# Love's labour's unveiled

## *The Painted Veil*

Directed by John Curran  
Starring Edward Norton, Naomi Watts, Liev Schreiber, Toby Jones and Dianna Rigg  
Opens 12 January  
Garneau Theatre

EDMON ROTEA  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

The movie poster for the new Warner Independent film *The Painted Veil* provides the statement, "Sometimes the greatest journey is the distance between two people," and director John Curran satisfies this message with intense drama, realism and beautiful cinematography.

Based on the novel of the same name by W Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil* is the third incarnation of the author's classic work—preceded by the 1934 version starring Greta Garbo and the 1957 film *The Seventh Sin* starring Eleanor Parker. Yet, even though the film is the result of a long line of remakes released in a market that's often flooded with dramatic romances set amongst the backdrop of the early 20th century, the movie delivers a convincing plot.

Kitty (Naomi Watts), a 30-something adult child who's the daughter of a wealthy, upper-class British family, enjoys her life of privilege—a life that involves partying, playing the piano all day and living the easygoing relaxed lifestyle of a noble heiress. However, Kitty still lives at home with her folks and remains dependent on them for financial support—and her parents long for her to find the proper suitor to take over the financial burden.



Enter respectable middle-class civil servant Dr Walter Fane (Edward Norton). After a "chance" encounter at a party hosted by Kitty's father, and a "surprise" first-date the following day, Walter and Kitty soon marry for all the wrong reasons.

Unfortunately, things worsen between the newlyweds when Walter discovers that Kitty has been unfaithful and threatens divorce. Longing for companionship—and perhaps revenge—Walter coerces Kitty to move to a remote village in the Chinese countryside, a region ripe with outbreaks of cholera and anti-imperial nationalist sentiment. What ensues afterwards is the staple plot of most historical romance dramas: a relationship that flourishes in a foreign remote land despite great adversity, hardship, tragedy and the human misery that the two lovers must endure.

Aside from the two leading actors, the third impressive agent in *The Painted Veil* is arguably not a person but the film's setting, the remote countryside of 1920's China. Audiences will be immersed by

the scenic vistas that enveloped the troubled couple. From the rundown Fane homestead surrounded by rivers and waterfalls to the nearby small town where nationalist fervor is as contagious as cholera itself, viewers will take a cinematographic vacation throughout rural China.

The only minor complaint with *The Painted Veil* is the pacing of the film itself. Although it's over two hours long, the film is quite rapid during the first few minutes (which is composed of a series of confusing flashbacks between past and present events) and gets tedious during its later parts—especially when Kitty expresses her disinterest and boredom during her charter days living a lonesome existence in a foreign land.

Yet, like the message on the movie poster, *The Painted Veil* is another historical, romantic epic that will take North American movie audiences on two journeys—one towards a remote foreign land, and the other towards a relationship that begins with superficiality and artificiality but ends with genuine love and tragedy.



## Red Ram

Stars Ablaze  
Independent  
www.redram.ca

JOHN KMECH  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

There's no doubt that Red Ram's debut album is ambitious. Combining acoustic rock, electronica and hip-hop beats around a core of grunge, *Stars Ablaze* is a solid, highly textured album.



## Andre Ethier

*Secondathallum*  
Paperbag Records  
www.myspace.com/andreethier

PAUL BLINOV  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Andre Ethier's curiously titled second solo outing finds him drifting through ragtime piano, heartfelt vocals and even some fierce, hard-rock drumming.

Although they usually blend choice musical elements well, the layering creates an uneven feel, particularly when switching from hip-hop beats to a pure rock tune. It's understandable for a new band still trying to find their niche and it should not slight Red Ram's effort.

*Stars Ablaze* features many moments of veritable catchiness and toe-tapping grooves, but the band's best moments are when they capitalize on vocal harmonies, such as on "Play the Game" and "Stars Ablaze." The title track features all of the aforementioned musical expressions, particularly the deep, grunge like vocals of lead singer Mark Feduk contrasted with the soft, angelic voice of guest Amy van Keeken. Really, it's this beautiful juxtaposition that's the highlight of the album. If Red Ram's effort is any indication, then there are greener pastures ahead for the band—just as long as they can tighten up their diverse, complex talents.

"In With the Prim" is the album's driving centerpiece; cymbal crashes and Ethier's howling vocals compete with pounding piano in a battle of "what's the catchiest part of the song?" It's like one of those kiddie competitions where *everybody* wins; the whole messy package gets stuck in your head and stuck on repeat of your music listening device of choice. Hooray!

Ethier also knows how to slow it down, and on album closer "Blacker Gold," he exposes a softer side that's just as catchy. He even stakes out a middle ground with "Don't Let This Mean Old World Swallow You," making *Secondathallum* a well-rounded listen.

Ethier takes his experience from the decade he's been making music and kneads it into something wonderful. Plus, where else will you find a song called "Now I Wanna Be Your Dad?"

# SU AWARDS

Recognizing those small things that make the world a brighter place.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "you must be the change you want to see in the world." Each year, the SU recognizes students who have made outstanding contributions to the campus and/or community. If you have helped change your campus or community, you could be eligible for an SU Award.

For more information or an application, **visit [www.su.ualberta.ca/awards](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/awards)**

Applications are also available at all Info Link Desks, Faculty offices, International House, and 2-900 SUB.

**Applications must be received in 2-900 SUB by Tuesday, January 23/2007 at 5 PM**

>> For further information contact 492-4241 or [ea@su.ualberta.ca](mailto:ea@su.ualberta.ca)

