

# ARTS

## Tom Petty mends weary hearts with classic rock 'n' roll

By Eric Rife  
DAILY AZTEC ARTS WRITER

Over their 15-year career, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have become somewhat of an institution.

From their early days as the prototypical bar band to their later evolution into a quasi-Byrds/Dylan sound, Petty and the Heartbreakers continue to maintain their legacy as *the* classic American rock band.

Although a giant forum may not be the coziest place to witness such a remarkable group, their performance Tuesday night at the Sports Arena demonstrated that the Heartbreakers are a durable and honest band; able to overcome the usual confides and corruptions of big time rock 'n' roll.

Playing in front of a massive oak treehouse, Petty set the stage for his own version of the world beyond the looking glass.

Opening the set with "King's Highway" and "I Won't Back Down," the band got off to a slow, but admirable start that accelerated with every song.

From the opening refrains of older material like "You Got Lucky" and "Refugee" to the last high strung notes of "Running Down a Dream," the Heartbreakers played with an intensity not normally left in a band that's been around for so long.

"(Drummer) Stan (Lynch) wanted to sing one," Petty said in between songs.

"Uh oh," he said as the door to the treehouse slowly opened. "It's the psychedellic dragon. Act like nothing's wrong."

Descending the stairs to the stage, the dapper reptile presented Petty with a "special" harmonica under glass.

"I hate it when that happens," Petty said, explaining his reluctance to use the dragon's gift.

"Should I do it?" he asked as the audience roared in approval. "I could have permanent chromosome damage! I'd never be the same!"



Tom Petty

"I would *never* be a responsible adult again, but I'm gonna do it anyway. But remember! *You told me to!*"

With a slightly feigned hesitation, Petty blew into the magic harp, sending the band to a different astral plane with a cover of "Psychotic Reaction."

Such theatrics are commonly blamed for the bastardization of rock, but Petty has a certain charm that enables him to pull off any stunt, no matter how grandiose or silly. Petty may qualify as a member of the rock "establishment" based solely on his longevity, but at no time does he forget those who put him where he is.

The commercial success that Petty has garnered over the last 10 years *does* have its drawbacks however. The Heartbreakers are a perfect example of a band whose original sound and image were changed irrevocably (albeit not necessarily negatively) by MTV. Although their visual productions are among the most creative ever made, their stage presence seems to have evolved under the direction of a man behind a camera.

Aesthetics aside, Petty and the Heartbreakers are no slouchers. Perhaps their most admirable trait is their dedication to hard work. Petty is about as unpretentious an artist as you could hope for. His extremely mellow demeanor may seem boring to some, but his earnest, driving dedication has allowed him to progress where others have burned out.

Even though he may occasionally appear to be operating in a haze, Petty continues to beckon his audience to join him as he peers through a mystical window into a world where everything is possible.

## Hughes raises questions on sex and control at Sushi Performance Gala

By Bart Cameron  
DAILY AZTEC ARTS WRITER

The iconoclast, anarchist, or generic outsider is a person generally not appreciated by the society that he or she stands against. What the outsider says isn't always desired by the masses. And when the medium used to communicate is not easily defined, the message is prone to being censored.

Such is the case with Holly Hughes, who will be appearing with Tim Miller, Culture Clash and Ron Brown in the Sushi Performance Gala on Saturday, Nov. 16, 1991. While Hughes' work resists a placid description, it's already raised more than a few eyebrows, as well as the ire of wishful censors.

The history of performance art stretches back to the Dada movement. It has recently gained popularity due to its ambiguous definition and the fact that performance artists readily embrace a socio-political stance regarding their work.

"The thing about performance art," Hughes said during a phone interview, "is that it's really impossible to make any generalizations about it or make any definitions about it, and that's what I like about it. It's like experimental theatre ... there tends to be less of a fourth wall kind of work going on.

"In this country," she said, "if you go to art school, with maybe a few exceptions, and if you read a lot of art criticism, regardless of the medium, I would say that probably 80 percent of that criticism comes from a place that feels that art and politics cannot co-exist."

The current political climate of hyper-conforming to an established orthodoxy doesn't allocate much space for anything considered "deviant" or "weird." Since the ultimate goal of any hierarchy is to maintain control, Hughes' performance pieces continue to resist authoritarian structures, both in style and content. This contributes to an unfounded hysteria created for political gain, flying in the face of what art "should" be.

"I just read something interesting by Benjamin Cardoza, 'Freedom of expression is the basis of all other freedom,'" Hughes said. "So if you follow that line of reasoning, one of the tools of oppression is really enforced by censorship and invisibility.

"I think the reason why my work has come under attack has less to do with style of presentation, or whether it's really very confrontational or not. The people that have attacked my work, Jesse Helms and other

people, haven't seen it; it has to do with the fact that they know some of the content I deal with is lesbian, and that drives them crazy.

"I don't think that there were people across America that rose up in disgust against performance art, or gay and lesbian artists or multicultural artists," she said. "What happened is that you had some neo-conservatives, like (William) Dannemeyer or Lou Sheldon, and other people that saw an opportunity to exploit people's prejudices and to portray people in terms that people would want to panic around, like 'pornographer.'"

While her work revolves around sexuality as a subject, Hughes said it isn't necessarily pornographic or obscene. Terms such as "obscene" are never easily defined.

As Hughes said, "My work would probably get a PG rating if it were male-female kind of stuff I was talking about.

"Erotic, pornographic — nobody's really come up with a demarcation. I think it's one of those angels on a head of a pin discussions. Nothing is really exact, and in fact, I don't think the distinction's important. It's a red herring," she said.

"'Pornography' is one of those words that pushes a panic button in the American psyche, in the way 'communism' did in the 50s," Hughes said. "I think one of the reasons why is that there is an opening (in the discussion) of sexual violence and abuse that is happening in this country, and I think that's good. But somehow we're looking for the wrong culprit."

In conjunction with the other artists who have donated their talents to this event, Hughes and the Sushi Performance Gala will inevitably contribute to the debate of what art is by expanding the parameters of the definition.

The Sushi Performance Gala is Saturday, Nov. 16 at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at the Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza. Tickets are \$25. For further information call 238-5582.



Holly Hughes

## Highs and lows make 'Highlander 2' a good movie

By Scott Puckett  
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After preparing for what was touted as the biggest letdown of the year, "Highlander 2: The Quickening," was as shocking as it was a surprise.

Set in 2024 A.D., the ozone layer is gone, and a shield created by Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert) protects the populace from ultraviolet rays. A terrorist group known as COBALT discovers the ozone layer has repaired itself, and the shield is no longer needed. The Shield Corporation has withheld the information to continue its existence and profits at the expense of humanity.

In addition, the ruler of the planet Zeist (the Highlander's homeworld) has sent two assassins to kill the aged Highlander. MacLeod dispatches them and investigates the claims of Louise Marcus (Virginia Madsen), the remaining member of COBALT. After the deaths of the killers, General Katana (Michael Ironside) journeys to Earth to do the job himself. Throw in various humorous scenes with Sean Connery, and a brilliant bit part by Jeff Altman, and the result is a film packed with action.

Unfortunately, the movie is too short, roaring along at light speed with too much material to be included in 91 minutes. A longer film would have been less breathtaking, but a more polished experience. As it is, the film occasionally jolts the viewer with three to four subplots.

The finished script isn't fully realized. At times, it comes across as being forced, largely due to the amount of detail and turmoil in the film.

Both weaknesses are minor when compared to the sequel's strong points. The execution of the excellent plot, acting and special effects are cause for complete forgiveness of the script's transgressions.

The special effects are arguably the best this year. Oscar winner John Richardson (Aliens) deserves at least a nomination for his work in "Highlander 2," which also contains the best explosion since "Die Hard."

The gorgeous and gritty sets are reminiscent of those designed for Gotham City in Tom Burton's "Batman." Post offices, opera houses, dams, and

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