Prisoner of 2nd Avenue

Co-founder Mel Edna (senior Rachel Mesler) comforts Mel (senior Andrew Orta) after they find their apartment robbed. Alpha Psi Omega's Prisoner of 2nd Avenue will be performed Friday and Saturday, Feb. 3 and 4, at 8 p.m. in the Yeomman Theater.

By Bill Greenwood

The song "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" has a profound connection to the Westminster Jubilee Singers. Also known as "The Negro National Anthems," the traditional hymn is performed at every one of the choir's concerts.

"When the alumni come back, and we don't sing it, they're like, 'What happened to 'Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing'?'" said Jubilee Singers President Helen Vassallo. "It's definitely a song that people expect us to sing.

"The song will take on an added meaning to each member of the choir when it is performed in the middle of Black History Month during the group's alumni concert on Saturday, Feb. 11. During this performance, Westminster will host a celebration of African-American sacred music, according to founder and conductor J. Donald Dumpson — the Singers plan to pay tribute to those who made the choir possible.

"In addition to "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," concert-goers can expect to hear excerpts from a piece entitled "Nativity" and a half-spiritual, half-classical selection entitled "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," according to Dumpson and Jubilee Singers Vice President Robert Upshaw Jr. While the performance will feature mostly African-American music, the choir's confidant is that individuals of all races will be able to take something away from the piece.

"The experience is for all; there's no doubt about it," Dumpson said. "We're going to do music that's going to move people from tears to laughter, tears to joy.

"Also, to add to the emotional resonance of the material, individual choir members were given a say in the evening's musical selection, according to Upshaw.

"In most songs, you'll find that the conductor picks out every single piece of music and the choir members have no say in what they're singing," he said. "[Dumpson] makes sure that the choir members get their chance to put in what they want to say because he wants to make sure whatever we're singing is what's in our hearts."

"This particular concert will focus on the students and what they have to say," Dumpson said. "You'll get a chance to hear some of Rider's most talented rising stars."

According to Upshaw, those who choose to spend their Saturday night with the choir will also be able to immerse themselves in the rousing and energetic atmosphere of the choir's performances. All in all, he said, it is a gentle nudge from the group to get the crowd up and moving.

"Most times, we'll get an audience that may not know if it's comfortable to stand up and clap their hands," Upshaw said. "As fast, they'll sit there, and you can see that their hearts are in it for the music, and you see their head bobbing. As soon as Professor Dumpson gives them the invitation, they're right up out of their seats and ready to go. They're right there in the music.

"The audience interaction is yet another example of the Singers' attempts to promote energy through music. Whether it's Latino, African-American, Caucasian or Asian, the choir hopes to bring its music together in a common celebration of African-American achievement. Concerns may even find themselves identifying with the individual singers themselves."

"If we want the audience to experience music and feel what we are about and what we stand for as people, then we will say, 'This is our music,'" Upshaw said. "It's our music."

The Westminster Jubilee Singers rehearses for their winter concert, which will be held on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m., in the Princeton campus' Brittal Chapel.

By Madeleine Johnson

If there was ever an album that offers the perfect soundtrack to play against dramatic readings of Edgar Allan Poe's gothic poetry, New York's Matchbox Romance has most certainly crafted such a collection of songs.

"Matchbox Romance's most recent musical endeavor, Voices, is a dark, brooding tale of self-versus-society that inversely touches into the gloomy catacombs of music's tendered realm. The band's attempt to abandon the traditional mold of the music has never been more alluring. A more beautifully haunting one invokes memories of a more morose and less produced Love-in-a-Tea Julia's Theory. While some bands try to change their sound only to produce a stumpfing mess, Matchbox Romance's newer sound is polished, packing an abundance of emotional intensity into a pleasantly psychologically interesting testament to what happens when musical exploration is executed masterfully.

"The four-person project that is Matchbox Romance, perhaps trying a skosh too hard to emulate the musical anomaly of the similarly named My Chemical Romance, has come to a hussle album that alternately threatens the listener, admiring the songwriting in its despair and ultimately smacks its audience right between the eyes with more layers than a Tostitos Doritos chip. The music is so disturbingly rich that an entire query could even hope to supply. Instead of beginning with a simplistically catchy hook, the album instead ups its game to a lunatic piano and disdainfully strummed guitar that gives way to gravely acoustic, all of which build up to create the teasing and mesmerizing first track. "You Can Run, But We'll Find You." As singer/guitarist Andrew Jordan's voice rises from dismally lowly vocals into terrifying screams, the song crescendos to make good on its title's promise. The song ends as unassuming as it begins, offering a promising introduction to a delightfully dark and deliciously thrilling album.

"The highlight of Voices is the haunting carried on of a dirty melody. "Monsters." The band palls are jarring, not joyous, and the eerie cocktails of the lyrics that paint the horrifying picture of the hand being "the monsters under your bed." In an album that takes a few rotations to fully appreciate and a few more listens to become a pleasing addiction, "Monsters" is the song that makes the listener hit the repeat button most often.

"While there may be a plethora of fancies to rear up to be found in one or two tracks within this darkly enticing album. There is a point when too much angst is a lot enough. One may be dismayed by the intimidating lyrics that seem to be flung at the album's audience. And if they're not initially a turn-off, the song’s lyrics can give the listener a serious case of the bushwhackings after prolonged exposure. Many of the songs sound blandly alike on the first listen or two, which is why it takes a little bit of effort to appreciate Voice as something more than just uneventful.

"All things considered, Matchbox Romance had the fortunate realization that changing up old musical formulas can result in a pretty rad album.

By Jordan Blum

Opeth rocks it up and tones it down on new album

By Bill Greenwood

When you first listen to Opeth's new album, the band hails from Stockholm, Sweden and was formed in 1990 by Marysongwriter and lead vocalist. Martin "Miser" and Martin "Lopez" serve as bassist and drummer, respectively. In addition, Peter Olofson (the band's touring keyboardist) has become a permanent member of the group. Every Opeth album (with the exception of 2001's Damnation) has followed the same time structure that makes the band unique. Akerfeldt and company shirk traditional songwriting by overlapping harmonies that change the song’s structure while the rest solely exhibit the band's more overtly heavy side.

"You have to feel as angry that your face turned red and your thought process was nonexistent! Have you ever felt a vague combination of sorrow, remorse and optimism? If so, you'll find that Opeth's music will successfully capture your mood in its music. This is a band that embraces the contrasts of white and black and light and dark. The group essentially combines death metal with soft rock melody, and it sounds great. Each album is a grand opus of emotion represented by a constant exchange between forceful power and subtle beauty, and Ghost Reveries is no different.

"The band hails from Stockholm, Sweden, and was formed in 1990 by guitarist Peter Lindgren and Mikael Akerfeldt. Akerfeldt also serves as the primary songwriter and lead vocalist. Martin "Miser" and Martin "Lopez" serve as bassist and drummer, respectively. In addition, Peter Olofson (the band's touring keyboardist) has become a permanent member of the group. Every Opeth album (with the exception of 2001's Damnation) has followed the same time structure that makes the band unique. Akerfeldt and company shirk traditional songwriting by overlapping harmonies that change the song’s structure while the rest solely exhibit the band's more overtly heavy side.

"You have to feel as angry that your face turned red and your thought process was nonexistent! Have you ever felt a vague combination of sorrow, remorse and optimism? If so, you'll find that Opeth's music will successfully capture your mood in its music. This is a band that embraces the contrasts of white and black and light and dark. The group essentially combines death metal with soft rock melody, and it sounds great. Each album is a grand opus of emotion represented by a constant exchange between forceful power and subtle beauty, and Ghost Reveries is no different.

"The band hails from Stockholm, Sweden, and was formed in 1990 by guitarist Peter Lindgren and Mikael Akerfeldt. Akerfeldt also serves as the primary songwriter and lead vocalist. Martin "Miser" and Martin "Lopez" serve as bassist and drummer, respectively. In addition, Peter Olofson (the band's touring keyboardist) has become a permanent member of the group. Every Opeth album (with the exception of 2001's Damnation) has followed the same time structure that makes the band unique. Akerfeldt and company shirk traditional songwriting by overlapping harmonies that change the song’s structure while the rest solely exhibit the band's more overtly heavy side.

"You have to feel as angry that your face turned red and your thought process was nonexistent! Have you ever felt a vague combination of sorrow, remorse and optimism? If so, you'll find that Opeth's music will successfully capture your mood in its music. This is a band that embraces the contrasts of white and black and light and dark. The group essentially combines death metal with soft rock melody, and it sounds great. Each album is a grand opus of emotion represented by a constant exchange between forceful power and subtle beauty, and Ghost Reveries is no different.

"The band hails from Stockholm, Sweden, and was formed in 1990 by guitarist Peter Lindgren and Mikael Akerfeldt. Akerfeldt also serves as the primary songwriter and lead vocalist. Martin "Miser" and Martin "Lopez" serve as bassist and drummer, respectively. In addition, Peter Olofson (the band's touring keyboardist) has become a permanent member of the group. Every Opeth album (with the exception of 2001's Damnation) has followed the same time structure that makes the band unique. Akerfeldt and company shirk traditional songwriting by overlapping harmonies that change the song’s structure while the rest solely exhibit the band's more overtly heavy side.