Pistolita CD out of this world

By Christopher Finazzo

For many musicians, making a new album, especially a debut, is something of a mudder—a process that leads them down many different paths, which can in turn define who they are as artists. San Diego-based band Pistolita has been on this path for nearly two years since the release of the four-song EP, in December 2004 entitled Gliss-Note. Now, at something of a crossroads in defining its own personal sound, the band has released its long awaited debut full-length album. The new release, Oliver, Under the Moon includes several songs from that EP, as well as other tracks that show the group wants to expand on its reputation as an "indie" band.

Looking up where Gliss-Note left off, guitarist Justin Shannon, bassist Alex Kuhse, pianist Conor Meads, and drummer Cory Stier give their fans more of the same solid punk rock that was a focus of the EP, while drawing on inspiration from the lyrics of Eton John and the music of bands like Dashboard Confessional (which they shared the stage with on several occasions as part of the Spring Tour) to create new sounds and musical styles. Most of the songwriting is handled by Shannon and Meads, and is a remarkably good match for the music that accompanies it. The band, even at this early stage of its career, finds a way to stick to the indie punk that made it popular while branching out into other genres, showing a great deal of versatility and staying power.

This versatility is showcased in several tracks as the band tries to set itself apart from other groups of the punk genre by showing a softer side. "Fadawhite," for example, features a prominent piano part, giving the song the feel of a ballad (a characteristic that is present on many of the tracks, but gives each song a unique quality). "Papercut" is much the same, with compelling lyrics to go along with the music that shows the band’s ability to match compelling lyrics and melodies. Of all the songs on the album, the last track, "Panic" shows just how talent the band really is. The song takes a more ballad-like approach that leaves the listener with a lasting impression of the band's ability to play various different styles of music.

Songs like "Cupid," "Age" and "Voicebox" are more in the vein of traditional punk fare, and are exactly what fans have come to expect from the group. These certainly do not disappoint and provide a break from some of the experimentation of the other tracks by returning to a familiar sound that is upbeat and well-received.

Certainly, this expanding of styles and songs does not diminish the polish

Jarhead" storms into BLC Theater

By Catherine Jablonski

Jarhead: n. 1. A slang term for a U.S. Marine because the "high and tight" haircut worn by Marines leaves their heads resembling a jat. 2. The mental condition of Marines because their strict training into killing machines leaves their heads empty of emotion like an empty jar.

A war film about the mental anguish that soldiers experience while waiting for combat, Jarhead gives the audience a sometimes-comical and compelling insight into what many U.S. Marines faced during the Gulf War.

Starring Jake Gyllenhaal (Breakback Mountain) and Jamie Fox (Rat), Jarhead is based on Anthony Swolford's memoir of the Gulf War. With no beginning credits, the film starts quickly, introducing the audience to Swolford or "Swoff" (Gyllenhaal) at boot camp. Unsure of his purpose in life, Swoff joins the Marines and is sent as a sniper to the Gulf War. Conditioned to kill, Swoff and his platoon slowly suffer from boredom that spirals into madness as they anticipate warfare that never seems to come.

Swoff is the heart of the film. Complemented by the dark humor of the screenplay, Gyllenhaal's voice-over conveys the strict regime of a Marine. With no hint of inflection in his voice, Gyllenhaal is able to show how a Marine is trained to think, leaving emotion out of the narration.

"Jarhead is one of the best movies about the Marine, is issued a solution," Swoff says. "If ill, go to sick bay. If wounded: call a corpsman. If dead: report to graves registration. If losing his mind, however, no standard solution exists." Gyllenhaal performs

New DVD on road to ‘Doom’

By John Schuler

In 1993, the first-person-shooter game Doom, in which you are a lone space marine who fights demons from hell, hit shelves. It revolutionized the video game world, leading to other titles such as Halo, and is deemed one of the greatest games of all time because of its amazing 3-D levels and action-packed role playing.

Recently, the movie adaptation of the game was released on DVD. Certain parts of the game are great, but as a whole, it falls incredibly short of expectations.

Doom stars Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson (The Scorpion King) and Karl Urban (The Bourne Supremacy). The two are part of an elite team of Marines sent in to investigate scientists who are transformed into genetically altered creatures in a research facility on Mars. The team finds out that the scientists created a DNA-altering substance that causes mutations in humans, and affects them depending on their souls. The Marines must track down the scientists and contain the situation before it spreads to Earth.

This movie has nothing to do with the original video game, which is why many similar films were not as successful as they could have been. It would be more interesting if it were more like the game, in which players are trapped in hell and have to fight demons, rather than fighting on a research facility. Although the story is interesting, it takes too long for the action to start. The acting in the film is horrible and has no substance. Johnson bosses people around and does not add any flavor to the character until the end. The creatures appear under-developed and the computer generated images are too obvious. The only highlight is the camera’s first-person perspective late in the film. It is truly an ingenious idea. More of these moments should have occurred in the film.

This DVD had some great extras to offer. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes documentaries about the creation of the creatures and the transformation of Johnson’s character. But these features do not make up for the movie as a whole. Stick to the game if you want true Doom.