# AROUNDTOWN

## 17 again offers no more than teenage heartthrob

#### Hillary Lindwall News/Wire Editor

The highly anticipated film 17 Again, directed by Burr Steers, does not live up to its expectations. Appropriately released on April 17, 17 Again can only be described as a subpar film. Although the movie did well at the box office last weekend, buoyed by the onslaught of 'tween Zac Efron fans, 17 Again would not be this reviewer's first choice for an evening at the

The film begins in 1989, during a basketball game featuring star player Mike O'Donnell (Zac Efron). It is revealed that O'Donnell's girlfriend Scarlett (Allison Miller) is pregnant. Disappointing college basketball scouts, O'Donnell walks off the court and decides to stay with Scarlett rather than to pursue his basketball career.

Jumping to the future, the older Mike O'Donnell (Matthew Perry) is dissatisfied with his life. He is not connected with his kids at all, he and his now wife Scarlett are separated and he is currently living with his nerdy, wealthy, computer-genius best friend Ned (Thomas Lennon). He constantly blames his wife for his failures in life because of the fact that he chose to marry her instead of pursuing the college basketball scholarship. O'Donnell wishes that he could go back to high school and do it differently.

It is at this point that O'Donnell meets

some sort of magical custodian. This "magicianitor" is able to make his wish come true. After a stormy night, O'Donnell returns to Ned's home as his 17-year-old self. After convincing Ned that he is indeed O'Donnell, Ned poses as his father and enrolls him in high school.

Although the film is rather throughout, the section in which O'Donnell is once again enrolled in high school is the funniest. However, most of the comedy comes from the dorky yet lovable Ned rather than Mike, old or young. The dialogue and banter are very relatable, which makes the film enjoyable, and there are a few lines in the movie that were remembered by this reviewer upon leaving the theater. Also, once the viewer got past the fact that Zac Efron was part of the High School Musical phenomenon, the movie proved to be at least tolerable.

There are four distinct sections in the film: when O'Donnell is a teen in 1989, when he is an adult, when he is turned into his 17-year-old self and when he is an adult once again. Separately, the acting in the sections is believable, but not possible to think that Matthew Perry actually looked like Zac Efron as a teen.

> Additionally, the 1989 section is not believable whatsoever. First, the clothing, dialogue and hairstyles of the actors during this section look more like today than 1989. Also, Efron does a

dance with the cheerleading squad during this section that destroys any hope of Efron becoming a serious actor. In addition to his dance moves, Efron's basketball skills look more like Will Ferrell's in Semi-Pro than Michael Jordan's.

The plot line of the film is extremely predictable, which makes the film seem to be a mere star vehicle for the wildly popular Efron rather than an intellectually stimulating, enjoyable piece of cinema. This is evidenced by the many slow motion glamour shots of Efron, which put this reviewer over

Throughout the film, it is O'Donnell's goal to win back his wife. This aspect of the film makes the audience uncomfortable because O'Donnell is 17 at the

when the sections are linked together, it is time and his wife is about two times his age. It was creepy and disconcerting watching a 17year-old try to kiss and dance with a mom in a romantic way

> The directing of the film is rather ordinary and not at all noteworthy, with nothing to identify Steers as an innovator with which to be reckoned. As a matter of fact, all aspects of the film are much of the same: predictable. 17 Again is a film whose star is a teenage heartthrob, whose acting career will only last as long as his looks. The acting abilities of all of the characters are also rather ordinary. The actors do their job, but that is all. There is no passion or true emotion in evidence.

> The only saving grace of 17 Again is that it proves to be a good way to give teens advice that isn't coming from their parents per se. Because O'Donnell is emotionally a full-grown man in the body of a teen during the majority of the film, he helps the teens in the high school as well as his children become better people and more successful.

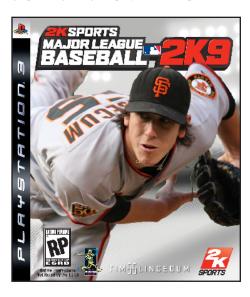
> Overall, 17 Again is a film that viewers should wait to rent on DVD rather than spending exorbitant sums to see in theaters.



#### MLB 2K9 smashes its standards out of park for grand slam

## Rexly Penaflorida Managing Editor

As the Cubs and White Sox fight their way through the regular season, gamers can enjoy their own version of the season on 2K Sports' new game, Major League Baseball 2K9 (2K9). Unlike its rival, Sony Computer Entertainment's MLB 09 The Show, 2K9 brings players amazing graphics, great gameplay and in-depth details



on every team, whether it be major league or triple A.

The biggest feature that 2K9 has to offer is the Living Roster. Whenever a trade or injury occurs in the real world, the game will adjust the rosters to be as up to date as possible—which means that even though right fielder Milton Bradley's in-game picture shows him wearing a Texas Rangers hat, he will be on the Cubs roster. Another great feature of the game is the postseason section in which players can replay last year's playoffs and make the Cubs win the World Series (knock on wood).

While the features may be the things to lure the player to play the game, one must also look at the game's mechanics. The pitching controls are much simpler than other baseball games and give players variety on the different types of pitches. The right analog stick controls the pitches, and each pitch is performed by a different pattern. For example, to execute a

fastball, the player must move the right analog stick up and then down; for a change up, the analog stick is pushed to the right and rotated 180 degrees. The right analog stick is also used for batting. Unlike previous baseball games that required the player to press a button and hope for a decent hit, how much the right analog stick is pushed will decide how fast and how high the ball will travel. In general, the control scheme is very simplified and is bound to give players a much easier and more realistic feel to the game.

The graphics are second to none. Each ballpark is made with accuracy and the facial features of players make them look very realistic. Even the crowd in the background is very realistic.

They also perform actions that correspond to every player's move. If the batter hits fly ball, the crowd will stand up in anticipation of a home run. Also, if a ball goes into the stands, the crowd around the ball will jump up and try

The commentary by the in-game broadcasters is great. It feels like hearing commentaries from an actual broadcast. The broadcasters also say little facts that are unique about each player. For example, with Cubs outfielder Alfonso Soriano, they talk about his little hop that he takes after catching a ball. Another example is whenever catcher Geovany Soto steps up to the batter's plate, the commentators mention his Rookie of the Year award that Soto received last year.

For a baseball fan and gamer, 2K9 has to be one of the best sports games that this reviewer has played. There are no visible flaws or glitches in the game, the Living Roster feature is sure to satisfy gamers, and above all, baseball fans might appreciate the amount of time that was put into creating the game as realistically as possible. 2K9 is the must-have sports video game of the year.



#### Diversey Harbor provides new perspective on life

#### Naomi Prale Around Town Editor

Clocking in at a little over one hour, Theatre Seven's production of Diversey Harbor captures the thrill and sadness of how four 20-somethings live in a big city and look for success and achievement after college.

In a world of unemployment and heartbreak, Chicago is the place where young adults can restart their lives anew. Playwright Marisa Wegrzyn, whose style the Chicago Tribune compares to that of fellow Chicago playwright David Mamet, creates a combination of loneliness and connection through four different monologues. The play connects each character with another in a carefully constructed way, similar to the way Chicago connects its streets and roads, so one can look at the vicissitudes of the characters' lives in the same way one can look at the whole city and admire it for all of its triumphs and failures.

The first monologue comes from lazy dogwaking James (Charlie Olson) who is a slacker and lacks a steady job. He sets the play in a largely informal tone, using the audience as his "diary entry," where he recounts various events in his life and then draws conclusions. In the day's entry, James has been out walking a dog late at night and sees a robbery. He lets go of the dog to help the victim, Lindsey. As the dog runs away, James helps Lindsey make a phone call and watches her leave, regretting not asking her for her phone number or walking her home. He ends his monologue on a sad note. Olson does a good job acreating an obnoxious yet innocent character.



Robin Kayon plays Grace in Theatre Seven's production of Diversey Harbor. Photo courtesy www.theatreseven.org

The other three monologues follow. Dennis (Brian Stojak) is an egotistical man, living on the north side. He finds the lost dog, and returns it to its wealthy owner, which sparks the promise of a love affair developing between him and the owner's wife.

Stephanie (Tracy Kaplan) is an aspiring bartender, who can only find work in a bowling alley. She finds herself confronted with fear and is put on the spot and on the edge when she decides to follow a man who turns out to be nothing more than a fragment of her imagination, or possibly a ghost. She plays James' ex-girlfriend and incorporates a bit of Chicago history into the play.

The heart of the play is Grace (Robin Kayen), who captures the magic of a young college grad who wants to be a street performer and then realizes that she cannot follow her dream due to her lack of a permit. Kayen skillfully captures the innocence of her character and the sweet underlining of her stubborn personality. Grace happens to be the roommate of Lindsey, the young victim who was robbed and helped by James, and through Grace's monologue, the audience learns Lindsey's unfortunate end, that was found dead in Diversey Harbor the night after she was helped by James. Grace is solemn when she comes to this part in her monologue, bringing a tone of tragedy to the show.

Diversey Harbor runs through Sunday, May 10, at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., in Chicago. Tickets are \$12-\$18 and can be reserved by calling (773) 404-7336.



Photo by Uzma Ahmac

## WestWord

#### New sushi restaurant brings new flavor and atmosphere

#### **Uzma Ahmad**Editorials Editor

When one thinks about sushi, the words "Village Crossing" don't usually come to mind-until now. Upon entering Makisu Sushi Lounge and Grill, a new restaurant located in Skokie at the Village Crossing center on Touhy, patrons are warmly greeted by staff and quickly ushered to comfortable and private seats.

The restaurant offers ample seating and carries a relaxed and swanky atmosphere. Although Makisu gives off a modern vibe, it still accomplishes a connection to Japanese culture through bamboo showpieces, Japanese plants and lit candles. Upbeat music in the background is enjoyable.

Makisu's generous menu offers a huge variety of sushi rolls (regulars and specials), vegetable rolls, noodles, temaki wraps and chicken or sushi entrées.

Miso soup (\$2) arrived first. This famous Japanese soy broth with miso, scallion, seaweed and silken tofu is simple and pleasant. However, it does not offer patrons anything more than regular Mishi soup that can be bought at other Japanese

The vegetable tempura (\$6), or deep-fried vegetables, including potatoes, carrots, eggplant and others arrived next. Despite being fried, the crispy vegetables are remarkably light. A savory dipping sauce is provided to add a hint of ginger, complimenting

rolls (\$8) include bell peppers and asparagus wrapped in chicken. The dish is delicately sautéed in ginger-teriyaki. These rolls are a slight offset from the savory tempura. The chicken, which the diner does not taste right way, is not very prominent. Instead the ginger is too strong and comes off rather bitter.

Afterwards, the main rolls and wraps were served. The creamy scallop wrap (\$5) is a temaki wrap that is seared and served with diced pineapples, mixed greens and citirs

Presented in a large, coneshaped roll of seaweed, the entrée is rich and velvety smooth. The luscious scallops are mixed with plain rice and are extremely filling.

> Similar looking to the scallop wrap is

the makisu temaki (\$9). This delectable wrap is hand rolled with sweet shrimp, tamago, tuna, massago, scallion, creamy white sauce and a hint of chili oil. Each ingredient is blended to create a delightful and filling seafood experience.

Although the spider (\$9) is described as one of Makisu's classic roll on the menu, this sushi roll is hardly enjoyable. Consisting of soft shell crab, massago, scallion, cucumber and avocado, the roll is dull and leaves a bitter aftertaste. However, creamy white sauce almost salvages the dreary taste.

To completely make up for this weak dish however, the Godzilla (\$15) is a monster of a treat. Listed as a Makisu Specialty Maki, the Godzilla comprises of eel, avo, cream cheese, scallion and sweet soy sauce.

On the side of the sushi, mouth-watering shrimp tempura adds both flavor and aesthetic appeal. The Godzilla may very well be the most exquisite, savory and delectable dish on

the entire menu, and is highly recommended. In attempt to top the main dish, patrons should take a quick

further is the Mochi (\$5), or ice cream covered in rice cakes. These are offered in green tea, chocolate, mango, strawberry and red bean flavors. The rice helps tone down the ice cream, so that it is not excessively sweet, producing a perfect way to complete this meal. Makisu offers a chic and smooth atmosphere and adequate staff

glance at the desert menu. Although most of the offered deserts

are that of regular desert dishes, some represent unique Japanese

specialties. Green tea flavored ice cream (\$5) gives an original

perspective on this classic desert. Taking this treat one step

service. Although most dishes are not of superb quality, all had extremely appeasing presentation. There are a few exceptions, such the tempura and specialty rolls such as the Godzilla that significantly surpass the eminence of regular sushi.

For those who enjoy fine Japanese cuisine, Makisu Sushi Lounge and Grill, located at 7150 Carpenter Rd. in Village Crossing, is great for a night out with a few friends.





this delicious appetizer.

Sushi and chicken rolls were served next. The ginger chicken

#### Reader becomes witness to life full of freedom, hope and love

#### Adriana Zalloni Sports Editor

David Cristofano's first novel, The Girl She Used To Be (Grand Central, 241 pages) is a haunting, poignant and enthralling tale of a woman who never truly knew who she was until a strange turn of fate allowed her to truly find herself.

Melody Grace McCartney has never been allowed to use her real name. Instead she is forced to hide behind eight aliases provided to her by the Witness Protection Program. After she and her parents witness a brutal crime, Melody and her family are given new identities and told to live a life different from what they were used too.

However, the story does not begin here. After a somewhat confusing flashback early in the novel told from Melody's childish perspective, the tales of her past slowly unfold in a more linear, more easily understood fashion for the rest of the novel.

When the story begins, Melody is a high school math teacher, but soon thereafter, makes a phone call to her federal contact, Farquar, feigning personal danger with the intent of being relocated. After Farquar resigns from his position, Melody is given a new federal contact whose name is Sean. Melody then shares her

story with Sean, explaining to readers the horrible crime she witnessed when she was only a child.

From the beginning, the reader is captivated Melody's personality, skillfully revealed through copious and authetic dialogue. As Cristofano tells Melody's story, he makes it realistic and personal, making it easy for the reader to connect with her.

Melody, at the age of six, begs her parents to take her to her favorite Italian restaurant for her favorite breakfast. reluctantly Melody's agreeing, parents take her at six a.m., where they find the restaurant closed. Not wanting to upset Melody, her parents

take a look out back, where they witness the murder of the restaurant owner by a man named Tony Bovaro. Choosing to testify against Tony, Melody's parents are murdered 12 years later.

Exhausted from recounting her tragic tale,

Melody requests stopping in a hotel to rest before the continuation of her and Sean's journey to

> but just as Melody begins to fall asleep, she is awakened by scenario that only occurs in her worst nightmares: a knife to her neck. Before even given the chance to explain, a handsome dark- haired man begs her to keep silent, asking for a chance to explain himself.

> Melody soon learns that the stranger is Jonathon Bovaro. the son of the man who murdered the restaurant owner so many years before. He offers Melody a chance of a lifetime: the chance to be free from his family and the constraints of the

Witness Protection Program. He asks her to meet him the following morning, promising to protect her from all harm, and seducing her with the promise of freedom and safety.

After much deliberation, she chooses to meet

Jonathon and the real story begins, Jonathon has a plan so complex and twisted, that it could be just what Melody needed. Her choice to go with him is not taken well by Sean, who continues to follow her and Jonathon, hoping to sway Melody to come back into the Witness Protection Program.

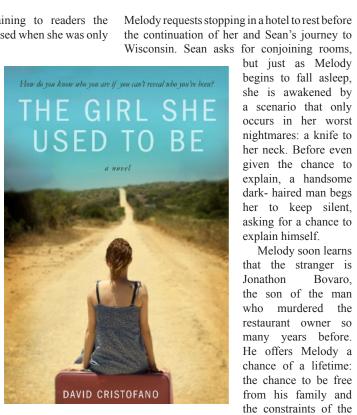
However, at about this point in the novel, it becomes repetitive, as Melody chooses to escape multiple times. It would have been sufficient to do it only one time.

Along the way, Melody's attraction to Jonathon grows stronger until it becomes evident that she has become afflicted with Stockholm Syndrome and fallen in love with the son of the man who was responsible for her parents' death, giving the novel the perfect amount of romance and

Through a series of twists and turns, the novel unfolds, providing the perfect conclusion to a story that captures the attention of the reader from page one.

Cristofano crafts The Girl She Used To Be in a manner that captivates the reader from the start with a realistic plot and a handful of likeable characters





# AROUNDTOWN

### The Prisoner captivates viewers with unusual plot

Third in a series

Naomi Prale Around Town Editor

The Prisoner is a single-season 17-episode long British TV series first broadcasted on the

British Broadcasting Company in 1968. A spin off/continuation of Patrick McGoohan's previous series Secret Agent, the show follows a British former secret agent who is held prisoner in a mysterious village where his captors attempt to figure out why he resigned from his previous job as a spy. McGoohan starred in and co-created The Prisoner, combining elements of spyfiction with science fiction and psychological dramatics.

The openings and closings of this series are particulary famous due to their originality. All of the introductions start the same, with the Prisoner finding himself on this island, called the Village, where he asks for information and receives the same response each time from a man named "Number Two," who tells the Prisoner that he has been named "Number Six." There are no

names in the Village, everyone has a number. using abrupt camera angles from different and

not a number- I am a free man!" This is the famous tagline of the show, that no man is just a number. The Prisoner, or Number Six, spends each of the 17 shows trying to figure out how to escape. He also tries to discover for which "side" his captors work and who is the neverseen "Number One" who runs the Village.

McGoohan creates the perfect spy, always on the lookout for new clues and findings, using his mind to outwit his captors, especially Number

Two. Complex story lines and themes circle the series with the Prisoner finding himself working dangerous missions He saves lives, goes through time travel, attempts escape many times and outwits his enemies, always looking for

Number One, the mysterious

leader of the Village. He escapes a few times, only to be recaptured by the series' oddest element, a giant plasticene ball that bounces after fugitives and envelops them.

> The stark cinematography similar to many spy shows of the era (the aforementioned Secret Agent. The Man From U.N.C.L.E., et al.),

Number Six responds to this by saying, "I am unusual directions. Sometimes the camera

rotates slowly, anticipating a big and dramatic scene and sometimes it jerks side-to-side, capturing fast action and surprise. The sound effects and score only add to the suspense of the show, and the use of strings helping to keep the viewer alert of an important section of the

Produced during the height of the Cold War, a major theme of this show is individualism vs. collectivism. The Prisoner spends his time trying to escape from the Village as an individual, because he wants to protect his identity and be himself, while the Numbers from the Village demand that he conform to the Village rules and standards of collectivity.

Spoiler alert: readers who plan to rent QVD series should skip the next three paragraphs and go directly to the conclusion.

As the show comes to an end, McGoohan is finally presented with an opportunity to see Number One. Viewers anticipate a big, dramatic finish. According to the DVD extras, some 1960s viewers were so disappointed with the outcome of the identity of Number One that they visited McGoohan at his house and pounded on the door to convey their displeasure. When the Prisoner is finally presented with Number One, he pulls of the mask of Number One to only see a chimpanzee. After a brief second the Prisoner looks again to see his own face on Number One's head and then tries to capture the evil he sees, but Number One escapes from Number Six. Eventually the Prisoner escapes back to London, taking a few friends from the Village with him.

The identity of Number One baffled this

that people might have been looking for an evil antagonist similar to a James Bond villain, but Number One is not one person—he he seems to be a part of Number Six's personality. This theory was reinforced by contemporaneous critics of the show, who noted that the opening montage always includes Number Six responding to Number Two's assignation of number by asking, "Who is Number One?" Number Two merely replies, "You are Number Six." Critics suggested that he is actually saying, "You are, Number Six," suggesting that the Prisoner has incarcerated himself for his own protection.

However, if Number Six has never been in control of the Village, he cannot possibly be Number One? So, who is he? It is quite possible that Number One may represent the evil side of Number Six, because as a spy, a part of him is evil. The identity of Number One asks viewers to think that there is evil in all humans, a small part of us, a notion that a less ambiguous ending

The Prisoner is a perfect example of a cult classic. McGoohan, who passed away in January, helped create a widely received show that is unlike anything else this reviewer has seen. The Prisoner is a must- see series for its dramatic themes and uniquely interesting ending that is surprisingly entertaining.



#### Reviewer Swoons over Silversun Pickups' sophomore effort

### Hillary Lindwall News/Wire Editor

Anyone looking for a deviation from typical alternative or indie-pop bands would greatly appreciate the Silversun Pickups' sophomore

The Silversun Pickups got their start in Los Angeles, California, just like many other bands before them including Rilo Kiley and Elliott Smith. Their new album, Swoon, combines this musical background with their fresh perspective on alternative music. Their mix of instrumentation creates an interesting tone that continues throughout the album.

The first track on the album. "There's No Secrets This Year," is a powerful track that grabs the listener's attention. It is a very defining song and lets the listener know what the band is all about. The chorus is very catchy and the song's obvious drum beats give the listener a happy,

interesting voice. During a few songs on the album, the listener is unable to tell whether Aubert is a man or a woman. As the songs progress, however, this is elucidated. This interesting vocal sound is actually very comforting. It is a nice change from usual indie-rock or alternative lead singers and his voice adds to the empowering feeling given off by the music.

The second song on the album, "The Royal We," can also be described as empowering. Just from the title, the listener can infer that the song will be uplifting. Stringed instruments can be heard near the end of the song, which add to the interesting mix of sound that the Silversun

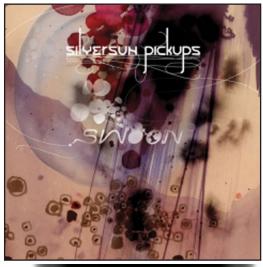
Almost every song on Swoon fits a basic formula: heavy, distorted guitar, obvious drum beats and a catchy tune sung by Aubert's tantalizing voice. This formula must be the reason why there is not a bad song on the album.

Following the formula, the song "Panic Switch" takes over the album. This was Swoon's first released single. The catchy, powerful tune is one of the better songs on the album. It gets The lead singer, Brian Aubert, has a very the listener pumped up and ready for anything. Swoon a success.

Like the other songs, "Panic Switch" uses an echo-effect to change the tone of the song. The Silversun Pickups then surprise the listener. After about three minutes, the song seems to end. However, a huge crescendo then takes place, bringing the song up to its climax.

Like all albums, Swoon is not complete without a few rock-ballads. "Growing Old is Getting Old" and "Draining" are slower songs, which are obviously not the Silversun Pickups' forte. The songs sound very similar and consist of seemingly the same musical line and lyrics repeated over and over. However, "Draining" picks up during approximately the last two minutes of the song. By this time, though, it is too little too late.

Overall, Swoon is a very successful sophomore album. Despite the fact that writing slow songs is not the strong suit of the Silversun Pickups, the rest of their powerful, distorted new album redeems them. Their songs are both comforting and empowering, making





#### Death Cab takes fans for joy ride at historic Aragon Ballroom

#### Naomi Prale Around Town Editor

The Aragon Ballroom is known for its rich history from hosting dancing and balls to famous concerts. Built in the 1920s, it was meant to resemble a Spanish village and was extravagantly constructed. Designed for tuxedoed men and women in satin ball gowns with trails, this antique venue is still standing. The lighting is dim, and Doric columns hold the second floor up from the first. The curving and spiral accents on balconies and Middle Easter and Aztec murals give the venue an antique touch. Soaking up Aragon's ambiance, one can easily imagine oneself transported to an era, the 1930s and '40s, when big bands featuring the likes of Frank Sinatra and Tommy Dorsey graced the stage.

In recent years, the hall has been reborn as a rock 'n' roll venue, hosting a plethora of bands,

many of them alternative rockers, including Muse, the Smashing Pumpkins, Franz Ferdinand and Snow Patrol to name a few. Death Cab for Cutie (DCFC) was the latest to rock the Aragon on April 17.

The band brought a feeling of energy and excitement that ran through the crowd. From 'tweens to the middle aged, fans lined packed the theater and pushed their way to the front of the stage. Due to the limited height of this reviewer, upstairs seating was a must to view the stage at a close angle. After impressive New

York indie rockers Ra-Ra-Riot

and Cold War Kids delighted the crowd, DCFC opened with a popular song from their album Plans, "Marching Bands in Manhattan." The tune uses a combination of an electric guitar and percussion that kept the melody in touch. Lead vocalist Benjamin Gibbard's voice soared

with the music, keeping the song upbeat. A crowd favorite, the tune elicited cheers upon the crowd's recognition of the opening chords and echoes of "whoo!" were heard throughout the concert hall for the duration of the song.

The pulsating energy didn't stop after one song. The rockers continued with "New Year" and the ever-popular "Crooked Teeth." The lyrics reminded fans of break-ups and lost love, their saccharine sweetness undercut by the crunchy thump of bass and drums.

> Although DCFC played a wide assortment of hits from earlier CDs, they did not slight their most recent

full-length album Narrow Stairs, featuring songs such as "I Will Possess your Heart," "No Sunlight," "Birxby Cannon Bridge," and "Cath..." Typically respectful if restless during the new songs, the crowd erupted during Lands' sweet "I Will Follow You into the Dark," which

brought out a chorus of relaxed, mellow singing along to the crowd. Fans popped their lighters, opened their cell phones and waved their hands back and forth.

The band's multi-instrumentalists seamlessly transitioned between piano, bass and guitar. All in all, DCFC presented a professional set. As the concert drew to a close, the band finished with "Soul Meets Body," the best performance they gave all night. While dancing is ironically prohibited at the Aragon Ballroom, many fans were bobbing their heads to the music, lost in their reverie.

DCFC's latest release, an EP titled The Open Door, was just realeased in stores April 14.

