



NEWSANDVIEWS
COVERSTORY
STEW'SVIEWS
UNCENSORED
LIBERTYBEAT
CONSIDERTHIS
NEXTGEN
WAYNE'SWORD
EARTHTALK
NEWS
HYGEIA
SPEAKINGOUT
INCASEYOU MISSEDIT..

BUZZ

BUZZLEAD
OVERTONES
PEOPLE'SREPUBLIC
SOUNDCHECK
CENTERSTAGE
ARTFLASH
SOUNDTRACK
WEEKLYPICKOFF
UNCOVERED
REELTOREEL
SCREEN
EXACTFARE
ELEVATION
WEBWATCH
HEADCHECK
CUISINE
CALENDAR
LETTERS
CLASSIFIEDS
PERSONALS
SEARCH/ARCHIVES
CAREERS



Keep Boulder weird

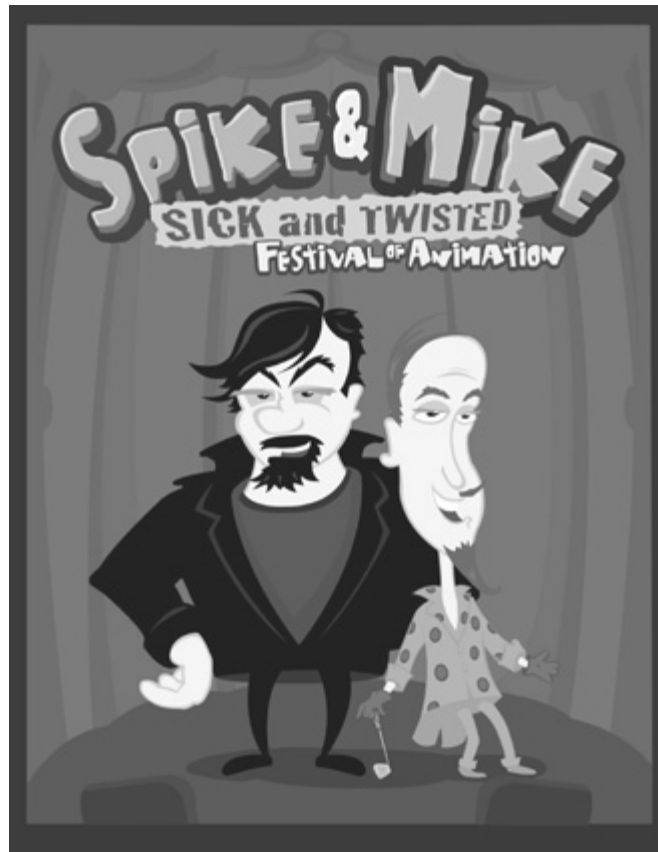
Mighty Fudge Studios and Sick and Twisted are putting the freak back in Boulder

by Vince Darcangelo

(buzz@boulderweekly.com)

Kim Campbell, the former prime minister of Canada, once said, "If you never encounter anything in your community that offends you, then you are not living in a free society." It's a saying that Patrick Mallek, founder and studio chief of Boulder's Mighty Fudge Studios, is

quick to throw at critics of Mighty Fudge's irreverent and hilarious cartoons.



Believe it or not, some of the animation company's creations—such as Magnetic Squirrel, Slimmy Jim and the politically charged Bobbleheads—have even managed to get some Boulderites' panties in a bunch, in particular during pre-feature showings at the Boulder Outdoor Cinema. It causes one to wonder: What the hell happened to Boulder? Are we the quirky, edgy Boulder of Trey Parker and Matt Stone; Ginsberg, Waldman and Burroughs; and Mork and Mindy? Or a tight-ass, self-righteous, no-sense-of-humor knockoff of Colorado

Springs more akin to the fascist conservative vision of Marilyn Musgrave than the progressive ideals the city was founded on?

Come on, Boulder. This is not behavior fitting of a progressive college town, the nation's one-time top party school, a haven for the world's most extreme athletes and the city that has been attracting the country's most colorful eccentrics for the past 30 years. We can do better than that. We get the chance to redeem ourselves and show our true, freaky colors this week when Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation makes its yearly rounds with a three-night stand at the Boulder Theater.

Spike and Mike joined forces in 1977, showcasing animation festivals that launched the careers of many famous animators, including Tim Burton and Bill Plympton. In 1990, Spike and Mike started Sick and Twisted, a venue for edgier and more adult cartoons. This groundbreaking and, at times, revolting yearly festival launched such famous cartoons as Beavis and Butthead, South Park and the Powerpuff Girls. Last year's edition featured the Mighty Fudge short My First Boner, which makes a return performance on this year's tour. For this installment of Sick and Twisted (as well as the new season, which begins in the fall), Spike and Mike turned to Mighty Fudge for a daunting and unprecedented task: to animate Spike and Mike to introduce the show.

In order to create a cartoon worthy of this honor, Patrick recruited the true voice of the Rockies, KBPI's one and only Uncle Nasty, to be the voice of Spike.

"He scared the crap out of me, he was so good," says Patrick.

Patrick should know. He voiced Spike's counterpart, Mike, in the cartoon, an unexpected development that occurred when scheduling a recording session proved difficult.

"I was driving down I-25 reading the script and practicing my lines," laughs Patrick.

The result is a two-and-a-half minute short that provides a worthy introduction to the Sick and Twisted festival and pays homage to the illustrious history of Spike and the deceased Mike.

For Mighty Fudge, being called upon by Spike himself to animate the legendary animation duo is an enormous honor, but its bestowing comes as no surprise to fans of the animation studio's cartoons. Big things have been happening for Mighty Fudge the past two years, including an appearance at the South X Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas, doing two music videos for Dressy Bessy and creating a website for the rock band Grinder (which is fronted by Detroit Red Wings star Darren McCarty). At this year's South X Southwest Festival, the Mighty Fudge video for Dressy Bessy's "Girl You Shout" was a finalist in the music video competition and the Magnetic Squirrel vehicle "Road Raged Rodent" was a finalist in the media competition.

But while Mighty Fudge has been garnering national exposure and renown, they are trying to foster the local cultural scene and promote the wealth of artistic talent that we have in Boulder—especially in the realm of animation.

"I get approached all the time by people who are fascinated by animation. We want to try to nurture this," says animator Erin Fay.

But with area venues and theaters closing and a new mall being built, the Mighty Fudge folks say that Boulder is at a crucial cultural crossroad.

"It's not a matter of Boulder not wanting culture. It's a matter of the corporate culture. Are we going to be a cultural town or a plastic town?" says Patrick. "Is Boulder going to give way to corporations? Or are we going to maintain some integrity? We don't need to be Aspen."

If Boulder goes full-on corporate, Patrick fears that the vast well of artistic talent the city boasts will dry up fast. For Mighty Fudge, Sick and Twisted may very well be the litmus test.

"I'm on a crusade. Either show up, or I'm heading to L.A.," says Patrick.

"Do you think they care if you move to L.A.?" interjects Kim Mallek, Mighty Fudge's musical director.

"They damn well should," says Patrick. "If all the talented people leave, what's left? If people don't come out and support your local scene, then there is no scene. It will go away. Come support something in your own back yard that's going national."

And what better opportunity to support the work of local artists than at the notorious Sick and Twisted? Incorporating foul-mouthed cowboys, naughty audience participation and raunchy onstage games alongside the finest cartoons that you can't see anywhere else, is there anything that could be better than attending the Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation? Yes, says Kim. Enjoying the festival while drinking alcohol.

"It's at a great theater where everyone can drink beer," she says.

After appearing at venues that didn't serve alcohol in years past, Sick and Twisted makes a triumphant return to the Boulder Theater—and the bar will be fully stocked for this rowdy collision of alcohol and outlaw animation.

"If you want to catch the next great animators, come see Spike and Mike," says Patrick. "Have a beer and watch cartoons."

Stick-up-their-ass, politically correct Boulderites who tap dance around objectional material need not come. On second thought, show up for the lesson in freedom that Kim Campbell preached to our Canadian brethren.

"If you don't find anything that offends you, you're not truly free," says Patrick, paraphrasing the former prime minister. "Come be offended."

Respond: letters@boulderweekly.com



© 2003-2004 Boulder Weekly. All Rights Reserved.