



AGENDA

Back when film censors wouldn't even let people see blood on screen, movie deaths were badass. Before the end of last month, *Entertainment Weekly's* handy Summer Movie Body Count had already climbed past 15,000. Each successive death in summer-blockbuster land is now about as significant as a lemming hopping off a cliff, and often less entertaining. That's why *The A.V. Club* is looking forward to the **Summer Noir** series at the west side Alicia Ashman branch of the Madison Public Library—essentially a rundown of the Internet Movie Database's 10 top-rated film-noir titles. Films like Fritz Lang's *M*, kicking

off the series on Friday, still incite rising horror with every fatality—even the ones that happen off-screen. Lang had no choice but to tell the story with some degree of tact, as Peter Lorre's little beetle face wasn't about to do any Johnny Depp- or Tobey Maguire-level charming. Lorre's unmistakable lilt is a bit masked in the German-language *M*, but blooms into its beloved creepiness with *The Maltese Falcon*, screening August 24. That gives you extra time to work on your impersonation (and hire a good sexual-harassment lawyer).

Tuesdays are now worth looking forward to, for at least two reasons that aren't booze (but still include booze, of course). One of *The A.V. Club's* favorite ways to smite that wretched weekday is with **Mercury Players'** monthly installments of demented short plays, **Short Shorts/Hot Pants**, at the Mercury Lounge. (The next is June 26.) One of the players describes it as "Robot Chicken-style theater" in an interview on page 34. For a more low-key Tuesday respite, you can now head to Mickey's Tavern, where dependable local singer-songwriters **Kelly Pardekooper**, **Josh Harty**, and **Blake Thomas** recently began a weekly gig together; all three should thrive in the informal atmosphere. Harty also opens a

house show for Chicago's **Chris Mills** on Saturday. **Comedian Eugene Mirman** is another master of casual, if your definition of "casual" includes handing out coupons for "two minutes of ass party—your rules!" and reading letters to assorted nouns, as he does on last year's CD *En Garde, Society!* His stand-up sets (catch one Thursday at Café Montmartre) and his web videos function as ingeniously crafted personal goof-off sessions. It can take a few tries to get on his absurdist wavelength, but once you do, there's no going back.

If gratuitous summer-movie deaths make you feel like this, catch the startling animated short *Ryan Friday* at MMoCA



Submit events two weeks in advance to madcalendar@theonion.com. Scott Gordon, Madison City Editor: sgordon@theonion.com 1360 Regent St. #173 Madison, WI, 53715

A.V. = recommended

CALENDAR

THURSDAY JUNE 14

MUSIC



A.V. No River City
High Noon Saloon, 9pm, \$6

Though No River City certainly doesn't skip on the world-weary lyrics or pretty, twangy guitar work many country-loving young bands rely on, it handles them with airy, unaffected grace. The Atlanta group's new album, *Wolves And Fishes*, sounds as if it could have been recorded on a windy plain or a flat stretch of Midwestern highway, the generous in-between spaces becoming just as important as the equally generous guitars, keys, and harmonies.

Thanks to the group's understated melodic flair, the record sounds mellow at normal volume level and huge when turned up. Folks who enjoy this should also try like-minded Twin Cities band *Romantica's* set Wednesday at Café Montmartre. Also playing: Brown Derby, Hayward Williams.



A.V. Horse Feathers
Indie Coffee, 8pm, \$5 donation/free*

Based around the core of singer-guitarist Justin Ringle and multi-instrumentalist Peter Broderick, Portland's Horse Feathers makes chamber-pop that frolics outside that genre's stuffy drawing room with lithe, portable songs. On its 2006 album *Words Are Dead*, instruments like mandolin, violin, saw, and cello of-

ten stack up for a bigger sound, but the group can also scale it back to just guitar and violin to carry its strong, crafty melodies. Horse Feathers usually tours as a trio, so expect a sound that's full but won't overwhelm the mature and graceful songwriting.

Grace Potter And The Nocturnals

Memorial Union Terrace, 9:30pm, free*
She's still in her 20s, but Grace Potter's warm, gutsy voice sits comfortably beside vets like Lucinda Williams and Bonnie Raitt. With its touches of classic rock and Southern soul, her 2005 album *Nothing But The Water* has found a home among fans who miss the good old days of Sheryl Crow's artistic peak (whenever that was). The upcoming *This Is Somewhere*, due out in August, continues in that vein, its spirited performances standing out much more than the songs themselves.

Chris Thile And The How To Grow A Band

Orpheum Stage Door, 8pm, \$18/\$20*
Mandolinist Chris Thile is best known as one-third of Nickel Creek, a bluegrass group that's found unlikely success beyond country revival's walls, but Thile has had success outside of Nickel Creek as well. He's re-

leased numerous solo albums, collaborated with master mandolin player Mike Marshall on 2003's *Into The Cauldron*, and recently released an album called *How To Grow A Woman From The Ground* (with a backing ensemble called, you guessed it, The How To Grow A Band). The record mixes covers (including a bluegrass take on The White Stripes' "Dead Leaves And The Dirty Ground"), instrumentals, and originals rooted in Appalachian Americana, though Thile remains eager as always to incorporate different styles.



Hometown Sweethearts: Babe's American Grill, 8pm
Karaoke: Badger Bowl, 8pm