Gettin' Jingy wit' it

By MARTINA JOHNSON
Staff Writer
manjohns@ius.edu

On Nov. 1, 2007, a merger occurred in which Whole Foods annexed Wild Oats. Whole Foods offered all of the employees at Wild Oats positions at the Whole Foods location on Shelbyville Road.

All of the Wild Oats employees accepted the new positions except Derrick Arnold, philosophy junior, and Brandon Gilbert, social informatics junior.

The two IUS students turned down the Whole Foods positions for ethical reason and proceeded with a new business endeavor.

"This is the culmination and conclusion of a long journey for both Brandon and myself," Arnold said.

Arnold and Gilbert are now focused on operating Jing masters, a Chinese tonic bar located in Rainbow Blossom in St. Matthews.

Tonics made at Jing Masters are based on a Daoism-originated herbalism model called the Three Treasures. Herbs are divided into three categories; inferior, general and superior.

The superior herbs are used in tonics which replenish the Chi (vitality), Shen (spirit) and Jing (primal essence). Among these, Jing is the most important, the building block on which Chi and Shen stand.

"Without Jing everything falls apart," Arnold said.

Jing Master Tonics are restorative nourishment designed for the maximum effect with minimal effort and financial expenditure for both Arnold and Gilbert and their customers.

Some of the herbs they use in tonics include ginseng, goji berries, reishi mushrooms and black sesame seeds.

They also use a variety of raw superfoods in their recipes such as cacao, agave nectar, maca, raw honey, hemp seeds and mesquite.

"When you're healthy, you feel good," Arnold said, "but you don't have to feel bad to be healthy."

Arnold and Gilbert started making tonics after experimenting with a number of avenues to feel fulfilled physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally including exercise techniques, different methods of diet and Yoga.

"When I'm going to be up until 2 a.m. studying, I need to be energized," Gilbert said.

Jing Master Tonics are designed to produce energy without the crashes and hazards of caffeine and drugs.

After making tonics for personal use, Arnold said the idea of turning it into a business was a no-brainer.

"We presented a business plan to Rainbow Blossom and got set up in a few weeks," Arnold said. "It's manifested a lot quicker than we could imagine."

The success of Jing Masters is partly the unique product they have to offer, but in large part the intuitive knack Arnold and Gilbert have for coming up with new tonics.

"Most of the drinks were made for the first time when someone ordered them," Arnold said.

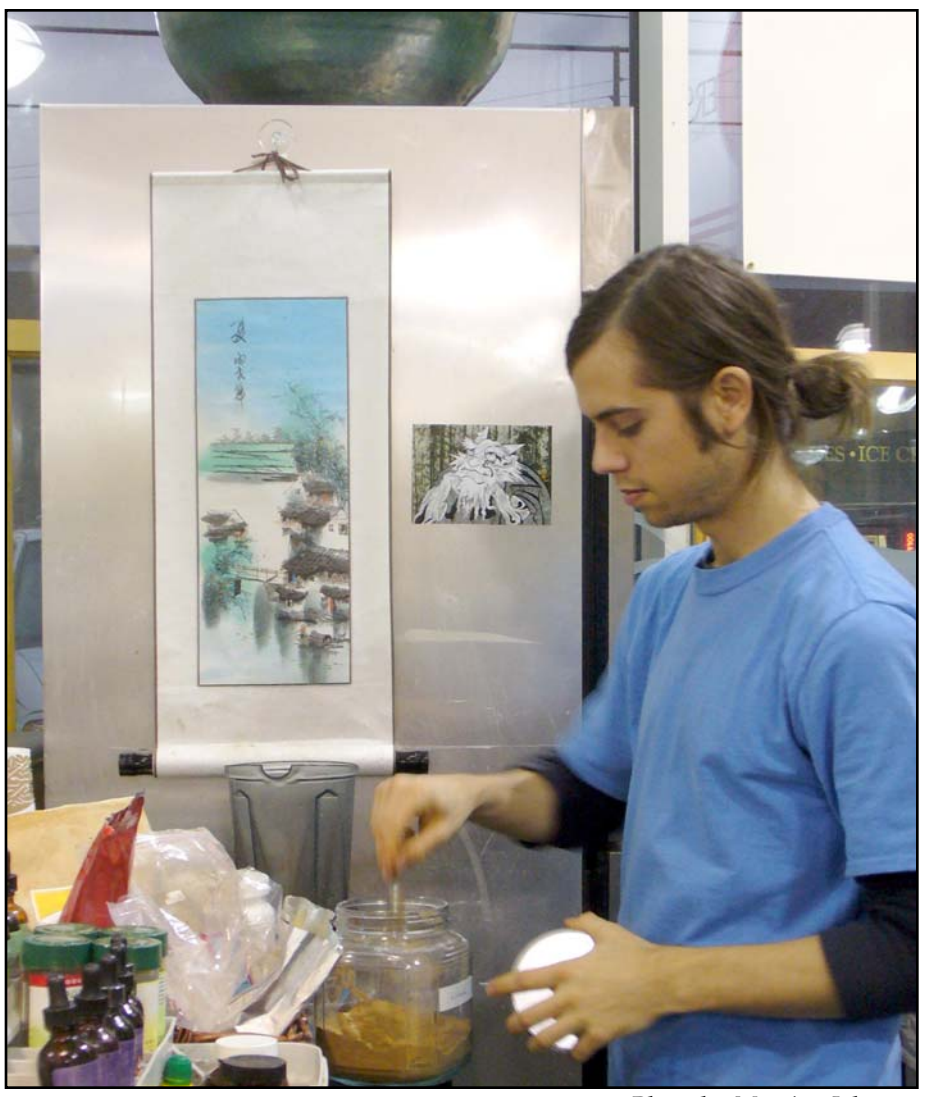

Photo by Martina Johnson

Brandon Gilbert, social informatics junior, prepares a Jing soup at the Jing Masters' Tonic Shop. Gilbert and his colleague, philosophy junior Derrick Arnold, have been running the tonic shop for several months.

"We'll just come up with a recipe," Gilbert said. "It's like instinct."

Since Jing Masters has experienced a good response, there are rumors of an independent location, but nothing is certain.

"We both work here full time, we're both full-time students," Gilbert said.

"It's a lot of responsibility," Arnold said. "If we did get a location, it would most likely be complimentary to the Rainbow Blossom space."

Jing Masters also offer alternatives that cater to individuals with Chi or Shen deficiencies in addition to chai, hot tea, hot chocolate and more.

"When you use the best products on earth you get the best response," Arnold said.

'Sweeney Todd' creepy, but classic

By MARTINA JOHNSON
Staff Writer
manjohns@ius.edu

In the immortal words of Bialystock and Bloom, there's nothing like a show on Broadway. You laugh, you cry, you have a good old time. And then in the morning, when you're sick and broke, you're left to wonder if it was all worth the trouble.

So, what's a more skeptical theater fan to do? No fear, guys and dolls, for the latest thing on the silver screen is the Great White Way. "The Phantom of the Opera" for traditionalists, "Rent" for contemporaries and "The Producers" for comedy lovers. But what does Hollywood have to offer for a more cynical, disenchanted demographic? "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."

Once upon a time, there was a nice family in London; Benjamin Barker (Johnny Depp), a barber, his lovely wife Lucy (Laura Michelle Kelly) and a baby girl, Johanna. But when the hardly-honorable Judge Turpin (Alan Rickman) sets his heart on a woman, he always gets his way. In this case, it's at the cost of an innocent man's freedom.

Now, after fifteen years of being locked away in prison, Benjamin Barker is dead. In the flame of his fury, Sweeney Todd is born. In the little flat on Fleet Street, there is nothing left of Sweeney's old life. A neighbor, Mrs. Lovett (Helena Bonham Carter), tells the story of Lucy's suicide and Turpin's adoption of Johanna. The rest is written in blood. Gleaming silver razors in hand and the loyal, adoring Mrs. Lovett at his side, Sweeney will kill his way to the top of the political food chain until he has his vengeance.

Meanwhile, Sweeney's young friend Anthony (Jamie Campbell Carter) unwittingly stumbles across Johanna (Jayne Wisener), locked away from the world by Turpin, supposedly for her protection. Anthony's plans to steal her away and rescue her pose the plot's critical question: will Sweeney be satisfied once his revenge is complete? Or will bitterness blind him to the woman who loves him and the friend and daughter who need him?

This film, before anything, is almost painfully human. Given the fact the two lead roles are sociopaths is probably not only a difficult concept to grasp, but also a difficult one to accomplish realistically. Everyone has a dark side, though. Who wouldn't consider murder a decidedly capital idea after having everything they love taken, much of it destroyed? Anyone who can answer that is a far better person than most. Depp and Bonham Carter, who both have previous experience with particularly eccentric characters, are remarkable as broken-hearted psychopaths.

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Keep in mind, also, this film is a musical. On top of that, it's one of the old school, like "Phantom of the Opera," which is sung almost completely through. This can be irritating. After the third Todd/Lovett conversational duet, things get a little difficult to follow. On the other hand, all praise to Rickman, Bonham Carter and Depp alike for outstanding vocal performances. It's nice to see actors and actresses who can actually perform, not just pretty faces regurgitating lines.

Along those lines, I have mixed feelings about Jamie Campbell Carter. There was absolutely nothing outstanding about his performance in Anthony, though he does simper quite nicely. On the other hand, he has an absolutely beautiful voice. An appropriate fit for his big solo, "Johanna" –

"I'll steal you, Johanna, I'll steal you. Do they think that walls could hide you? Even now, I'm at your window. I am in the dark beside you, buried sweetly in your yellow hair!"

Sort of a stalker's sonnet, isn't it? Much like Anthony, it's beautiful, but a little creepy. Not the most entertaining song on the soundtrack, either; an inane performance for an inane piece of music.

With that one exception aside, the rest of the score is phenomenal. It's got a dark, haunting sound, shot through with demented humor. Keep an ear out especially during Bonham Carter's first number, "The Worst Pies in London."

My biggest complaint is the violence. Actually, it's fairly interesting to see so much blood and guts in a musical, just as a change of pace. But if we're going to be subjected to it, why does it have to look so over-the-top and bogus? I don't mind seeing it, so long as I can believe it.

Some bad effects and the small faction of rank acting aside, this is a thoroughly enjoyable film.

It's wickedly funny, darkly poignant and oh-so tongue in cheek.

"Sweeney Todd" is an anti-hero story that is destined to become a cult classic.

'Accuracy is to a newspaper what virtue is to a lady, but a newspaper can always print a retraction.'

– Adlai E. Stevenson

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