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MUSIC

Crazy 8's Headline Concert

by Jackie Barry

Dancin' in the Park will be a fun-filled afternoon of music in Alton Baker Park's outdoor amphitheater on Saturday, June 1.

The Crazy 8's is one of the hottest Northwest bands performing today. The 8's live performances have generated an enormous following in towns where they play on a regular basis. In places like Portland and Eugene, the 8's fill the dance floor from the first beats.

Crazy 8's is the perfect name for this band.

Yes, there are eight of them, it's catchy (eights is concise and compelling, so is crazy) and they fit the image—so as not to confuse fans.

They hail from around the country (Ohio, Bakersfield, Chicago, and Portland) and all ended up three years ago in Corvallis.

The band's first engagement was as a replacement act for the Sneakers who'd broken up and consequently couldn't make it. Former Sneaker Todd Duncan (8's lead vocalist and alto sax player) initiated the 8's partnership to fill the date.

After only three rehearsals, the band was greeted with a fair amount of acceptance on that first date, according to 8's keyboard player Casey Scharr. It's "snowballed" since then, says Scharr, who also moonlights as an engineer for a telecommunications firm.

Besides Duncan and Scharr, band members are: Mike Regan on bass; Carl Smith on percussion



Obo Addy performs on Saturday, June 2 in the Alton Baker Park Amphitheater. On the same bill are the Crazy 8's and Bill Rancher/Flesh and Blood.

with some vocals; Tim Tubb, trombone and vocals; Mark Wanaka, guitar and vocals; Rick Washington on drums; and Danny Schaffler who joined the 8's three weeks ago, playing tenor sax and performing vocals.

The 8's released an album, "Law and Order," more than a year ago. Several of the album's eight cuts receives national airplay with "Johnny Q" (Public) played as far east as WLIR on Long Island—where it was dubbed "Screamer of the Week."

The 8's composition relies heavily on brass leads and diverse percussive accents. They have a big band sound—partly because of their numbers and partly because of their gusto. These guys play reggae-flavored rock with no holds barred.

Their predominantly original lyrics depict political and economic climates in the Americas, according to white Americans (not surprising since six band members are white).

Besides lyrical content this enormous, fairly distinctive, wall-of-sound relies on a lucid, action-oriented beat which band members keep pace with as they dance and play on the stage.

Last month, in the EMU Ballroom on the UO Campus, band members were crammed onto the stage but the five 8's in the front-line kept up a harmonious and extremely mobile performance. Various 8's made major treks in this crowded space: band members moved to other instruments for assorted numbers, a couple of guest artists ran on stage

for one number, and two guys managed the sea of fans tightly pressed against the stage. This sea would occasionally roll one of its constituents over the row of monitors on the edge of the stage and would have to be tossed back.

This didn't prevent players in the front row from venturing into the ranks of the audience, however. Duncan, at one point, rode into the audience on a crew member's shoulders, and Schaffler and Duncan both stepped over the row of monitors periodically where fans would touch their legs and feet. Schaffler also threw two containers of ice water onto the audience during the second set.

As a result of the zany, fast-paced activity on stage the 8's live presence is much more impressive than the recorded version. Although, Scharr says, they're "still learning how to use the studio."

The Crazy 8's will be joined on Saturday by Billy Rancher/Flesh and Blood and Obo Addy/Kukuru. The music will begin at 2 pm and tickets cost \$5 in advance. They're available at Hult Center outlets and the U of O, EMU. Day-of-show tickets are \$6.

The Eugene Parks & Recreation Department is sponsoring the show. They recommend parking at Autzen Stadium where a footbridge leads right to the amphitheater. It's actually closer than walking from Alton Baker Park. Large signs will point the way.

[Jackie Barry is a Mass Communications major at LCC, and editor of The Torch, a student publication.]

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