

MUSIC

At the Country Fair

The Rockin' Razorbacks

The Rockin' Razorbacks are not a group of wild hogs as their name implies, but rather a trio of well-practiced musicians. They're continuing an American tradition of music—from Carl Perkins to The Blasters.

The Portland-based Razorbacks played in Eugene this spring after a one year absence. They've been touring—playing at ski resorts and throughout the Northwest—to open for Robert Cray, George Thorogood, even Bo Diddley.

The group practices a lot, you can tell. They move effortlessly through songs, delivering clean, well-constructed melodies. They sailed through dozens of numbers and with only one or two exceptions, their music was characterized by a fast-paced blend of rhythm and blues/rock and roll. The overall sound is not exceptional or unique but rather well-played renditions of classic tunes. The Razorbacks music is by no means trendy, even their original tunes are straight from another era.

"We're fighting an uphill battle," admitted band leader and bass player Michael Kearsey, speaking about audience acceptance of the music they play. But he also says the music is "vital" and "makes your body wiggle."

by Jackie Barry

The Razorbacks don't present a very trendy visual image either. Kearsey's was the most striking. He wore a crepe jacket that would make a clothes buff drool but wouldn't do much for the average consumer. Kearsey also sported a period hairdo complete with ducktail and a tie clasp shaped like a house trailer and studded with rhinestones. Guitar player Chris Miller wore a plaid flannel shirt and leather jacket for the first set and a wool vest and white cotton shirt for subsequent sets. His geometric hairdo lends the only trendy note to this band's demeanor. Drummer Jeff Hudis wore a western shirt with the sleeves removed.

The Razorback's equipment is not particularly flashy either. Miller plays a stunning Les Paul guitar which is hooked up to a basic tremelo/reverb pedal. That's as high tech as this band gets.

Despite the fact that the sound is not unique, the musical abilities of the Razorbacks are more than adequate.

Miller's guitar playing is exceptional. Playing all leads makes him the most noticeable anyway, but he shines nonetheless. During



Photograph by David Stein

The Rockin' Razorbacks are from Portland. They play your basic blues and rock and roll. They'll be at the Oregon Country Fair, Sunday at 2 pm on the Main Stage.

one song, Jimmy Reed's "Hush Up," Miller actually carries on a conversation with his guitar, his fingers sliding around the neck create the voice of his "woman."

Kearsey and Hudis remain more in the background of the music

which is as one would expect. They seem content to provide back-up for Miller.

The Razorbacks have one album available at area record stores—entitled simply *The Rockin' Razorbacks*. They've re-

corded two cuts for a blues compilation, a joint project with other bands from the Northwest, which is not on the market yet.

They can be heard on Sunday, July 14 at 2 pm on the Main Stage at the Oregon Country Fair.

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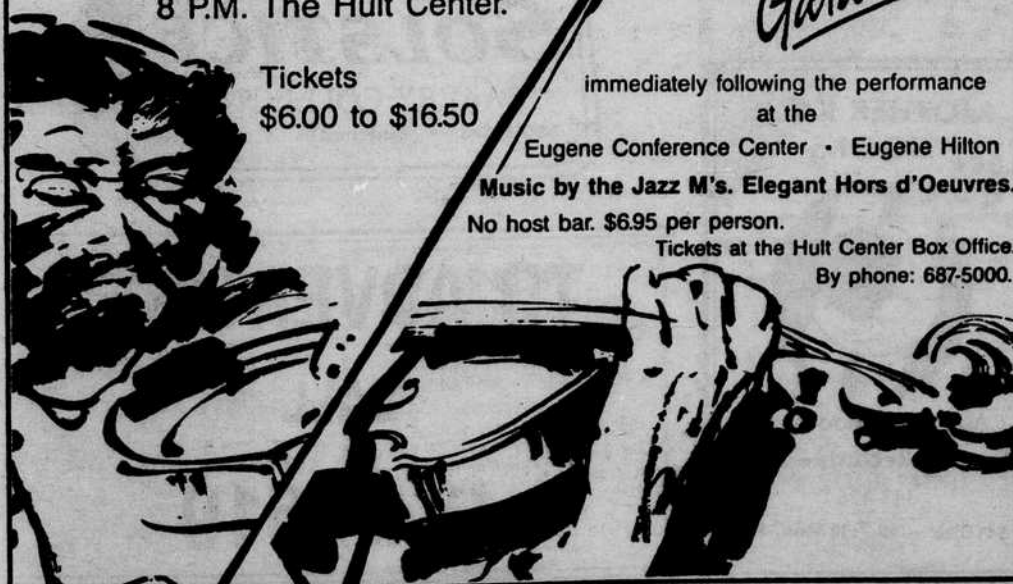
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