

Coleman's colorful cacophony

Ornette Coleman sailed into the EMU Ballroom Sunday night on a wave of innovative jazz sound that surprised and delighted the full house that turned out to see one of the figureheads of modern jazz.

Coleman and his band, Prime Time, transformed the expectant, reserved audience into a room of true believers after only a few songs. This opened the doors for a musical experience that won't soon be forgotten by those fortunate enough to have attended what may be the jazz event of the year for Eugene.

Ever since Coleman burst upon the jazz scene playing his free form improvisational music on alto sax and violin to bewildered New York audiences in 1959, he has been hailed as a true genius and bombasted as a musical charlatan. His revolutionary music has never drawn responses of mediocrity.

Sunday night's performance was no exception. His musical voice gave each piece a fresh sound that stood on its own with a clearly emotional quality. Each piece allowed Coleman's musical genius to shine clearly, while showcasing the talents of

the backing band.

Prime Time consists of two drummers, two guitarists and two electric bassists. Never do any of the musicians play a riff similar to what his counterpart is playing. For instance, one bass player will hold down the bottom with a standard bass line while the other plays a melody line in unison with the saxophone.

"I'm always trying to achieve the sound of a small orchestra," Coleman said backstage after the show. He developed this idea in a landmark recording in the mid-60s called "Free Jazz" where he pioneered the use of doubling the instruments and called the resulting band a "double quartet." Prime Time is certainly the state of the art for Coleman's visionary "small orchestra."

Two of the most memorable songs of the evening were served up with a definite latin flavor. "Latin Genetics" started with an innocent south-of-the-border theme which quickly expanded to make room for all of the instruments to improvise freely in a general direction understood by everyone in the

band.

This is central to Coleman's music, taking a "written" theme and allowing the musicians to color it with their musical expressions. This results in a controlled mayhem that many mistake for a total disregard for musical form, but the theme and melody are always in the back of the musicians' minds, and the band will collectively resolve into the main theme when least expected.

"Dancing In Your Head" sounded like music pouring onto the tequila streets of Mexico on a Saturday night. Here Coleman gave a constant reminder of the melody with unexpected snips of the theme thrown in throughout the song. The band whips out a blues tempo change that pops in out of nowhere, and Bern Nix, the more traditional of the guitarists, takes some great blues riffs. Ornette dances back in, fiercely playing his Mexican melody as if he never wants you to forget it. When he abruptly stops, the audience sat stunned for seconds before remembering to applaud.

Coleman's dynamic, pulsating electric sound could be mistaken for the more



Ornette Coleman

popular "fusion jazz," but is definitely a pure evolution of his controversial music of the 60s with the harmonic and rhythmic freedoms he discovered intact. He's just added modern instrumentation to his ever-changing entourage.

The result is what Coleman calls "a combination of planet

culture that any person or race can participate in with their own individual style. Ethnic music is going to be the next universal expression."

Judging from the reception of Sunday night's audience, his prediction may be right on target.

by john navazio



Sammy Hagar

Hagar, Quarterflash ready to rock Eugene

On the night of March 16, Sammy Hagar and Quarterflash will bring what will probably be the hottest-heaviest rock show to hit Eugene this year to the Lane County Fairgrounds. The rafters will be trembling and the crowd will be shaking from the time Quarterflash takes the stage, through the moment when Hagar leaps into the fray and slams his way through the power chords of his final encore.

Quarterflash came into being less than a year ago, the synthesis of two prominent Portland bands: Seafood Mama and Pilot. That combination led to a sound that is best described as power pop. The single "Harden My Heart" was released in late September and climbed as high as number three on the Billboard record charts. To date, "Harden My Heart" went more than 22 weeks on the charts and sold over 600,000. It's not optimistic to assume the record will exceed a million sales.

Quarterflash's second single, "Find Another Fool," took off much faster than "Harden My Heart." Both singles are receiving extensive radio airplay.

The teaming of Quarterflash with consummate heavy metal guitarist Hagar is more than a little *apropos*. Quarterflash's solid rock musical style complements Hagar's more frenetic and powerful guitar.

Hagar, according to the trade magazines, is poised on the brink of superstardom. That's about a ton and a half of balderdash. Hagar has been over that "brink" since he split with Ronnie Montrose. The two, Hagar and Montrose, were too potent as individuals to stay together long. But the two LPs Hagar and Montrose recorded, "Montrose" and "Paper Money," remain as classics in the heavy metal mold.

Hagar's style since leaving Montrose has become more defined and definitely his own. With LP's like "Nine on a Ten Scale" and "Sammy Hagar" (the notorious "Red Album") Hagar has established his niche in rock music.

Tickets for the show are available at Everybodys' Records, and cost \$9 in advance.

by cort fernald



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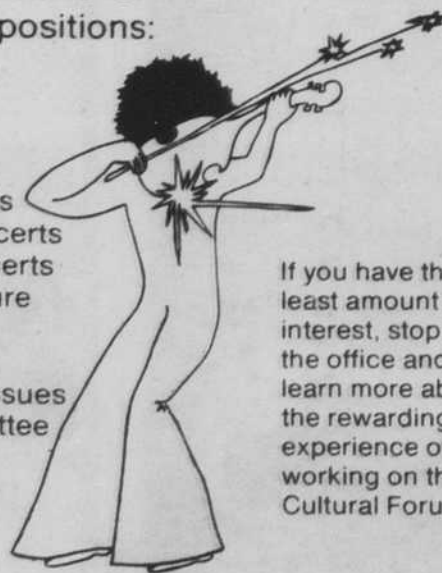


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