

Onslaught for the senses

By Pat Yonally
Emerald Contributor

Little did the Woodmen of the World know when they built the WOW hall in 1932 that it would someday be the home of the Eugene Community Center for the Performing Arts and the scene of an alternative rock blowout just in time for the Halloween weekend.

The performances tonight feature the incredible assortment of piano-god D.J. Lebowitz, poprawkers My Name, Texan fallout Three Day Stubble, and Portland's own brand of noisehead godrock, Hitting Birth.

D.J. Lebowitz will get things rolling at 9:30 tonight with his punk-powered piano stylings. An exception to the largely guitar-dominated world of alternative rock culture, Lebowitz has found his calling performing maniacally-driven, piano-crazed music from coast to coast. He's been called "a pure genius" and "sheer entertainment," but praise like this hasn't come lightly. Lebowitz has seen his share of heartache, including being gonged in 1979 on the world famous Gong Show.

Performing covers by bands as diverse as the Police and the Dead Kennedys, Lebowitz always manages to instill a heavy dose of the bizarre into his work. With lyrics like "Who is the king of happiness? Who is the king of success? Who is the king of our future and our future destiny? 'Not I' said the duck," he blows the lid off of the traditional approach to the term "pianist."

The names Abe, Robb, Trevor, and Dave make up My Name, coming all the way down from Tacoma to help live up tonight's festival of sound. These guys have been playing together for six years in one form or another and their efforts

show through in both their live performances and their first CD, *Megacrush*, on C/Z records.

Their lyrics are so well-sculpted that one may be struck with the sensation of reading a tiny literary magazine when first glancing through the CD insert booklet. Some of the phrasing is reminiscent of an unpublished comic book lying unfinished in someone's shoe box underneath a bed. "Perverted and nervous man stares through his sunken sockets, checking for incriminating evidence in his pockets. Finding none, he methodically scrubs his hands in a sink that could tell some stories. Then repairs to the chair in the middle of his white trash living room operating his remote control with authority, and savoring sordid memories..." It might not look like a song on paper, but these guys really put it out.

Next up is Three Day Stubble from Houston, Texas. Any band whose first recording was only available on 8-track has to be worth seeing. They've called themselves "a giant mental can opener" and practice the art of nerdism at its musical finest.

Likened to Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart, these folks churn out an off-kilter assemblage of tunes designed to challenge the theories of traditionally-oriented musical sensibilities. The odd layerings of semi-vocals and disjointed sound momentums might lead a person to wonder if this is what it would sound like if guitars spoke a foreign language.

Closing tonight's showcase of Halloween-inspired audio-visual oddities is, suitably, Hitting Birth. These freaks from Portland carry out a most

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Col. Bruce Hampton and The Aquarum Rescue Unit join Little Women and The Renegade Saints on Halloween night at the WOW Hall.

Rescue Unit will rock and rollick

By Ming Rodrigues
Emerald Contributor

It promises to be a devilishly rollicking Halloween at the WOW Hall Saturday night.

Three major bands who were offered "twice as much money to play elsewhere" have instead decided to get together at the WOW Hall for this event.

"It's a rare opportunity to see these big bands in one region and in a venue this small," said Adam Zacks, EMU Cultural Forum's national music coordinator. "It's going to be a pretty trippy evening, and I think everyone should come and celebrate."

The subject of two recent *Rolling Stone* articles including a four star review and tours with bands such as Phish, Blues Traveler, Widespread Panic & Spin Doctors, the Atlanta band Col.

Bruce Hampton & The Aquarum Rescue Unit are making this their first headlining performance in Eugene and the last stop on their Northwest tour.

"We had a hard time getting them in, but if they were playing the South on Halloween it would be in a 3,000-seat theater rather than a 400 capacity community dance hall. That says something special about our Halloween," Zack said.

Little Women and The Renegade Saints are the other two bands slated for the evening. Since their last sold-out show at the WOW Hall and a new live album, Little Women have come under the fiery looking glass of the industry's best. When pressed to describe his band, Little Women singer-songwriter Jerry Joseph says, "It's ZZ Top on acid with Black Uhuru in the rhythm section."

Meanwhile, Renegade bassist Dave Coey likes to describe the Saint sound as a "Bohemian boogie grind." But whether it's straight-ahead mid-western rock, Texas swing, Latin-African or San Francisco psychedelic, the guys deliver from the gut, or in guitarist Alan Toribio's words, "playing every note like it was our last." Halloween will mark the end of the group's month-long tour that spanned California, Utah, Colorado, Idaho and Wyoming.

In addition to the major billings, there will be a few surprise guests and an "especially new and strange Halloween atmosphere" planned for the Hall. "All I can say about the decor is that it's going to be humorous and enlightening," Zack said.

"With Halloween falling on a Saturday, this party's going to be unforgettable," he said.

Tickets, at \$10 for students and \$12 general admission, are available at the EMU Main Desk. Showtime is 8 p.m. and doors open at 7:30 p.m.

El Dia de los Muertos has various incarnations

"The Day of the Dead" or "El Dia de los Muertos," a tradition which existed in Mexico and other Latin American countries in pre-Columbian cultures, is being revitalized and preserved by Chicanos and Latinos in Eugene and throughout the United States.

Although the specifics involved in the practice of this tradition vary greatly between countries and even between cities within Latin America, those who practice the tradition share a common desire to pay tribute to deceased loved ones.

In Mexico as in other countries, "The Day of the Dead" is a national holiday. Preparation for the celebration begins as early as Oct. 31, said Armando Morales, who grew up in Mexico. Morales warmly recalls the preparation for the day of celebration.

"My mother would buy camote, which is a sweet root like the potato," he said. "Then she would boil it and add fruit. From the mixture would result a jam called cajeta. Later she would buy the pan de muertos and candles. Then we would construct the altar."

Many Mexicans construct an altar in their homes to pay special tribute to their loved ones. Pictures, flowers and favorite items of the deceased adorn the altar along with one candle to represent each soul of the dead. Morales said that a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe is often placed in the center of the altar or next to the picture of a loved one.

Susan Deerborn Jackson, who recently spent a year researching the "The Day of the Dead" in Oaxaca, Mexico, said the altar is constructed to please the dead. It is a common belief in Oaxaca that the dead can intercede with God for the blessings of the living.

Jackson also observed that in areas such as Oaxaca, where there is a large indigenous population, "The Day of the Dead" is celebrated with more traditional elements. Such elements include aromatic things as "copal," a resin with an intense pine odor. "Cempasuchil," which is similar to the marigold, is used to make a path to the altar to guide the

dead souls. "The dead are attracted by odors and partake of the essence of the food through aromas," Jackson said.

Latin American students from countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, say the construction of an altar is not common. On Nov. 2 they do share the custom of going to the cemetery to pay their respects to the dead. However, the exact day may also vary from place to place.

Story by
Katy Moeller

In Mexico, people typically bring flowers, favorite items of the deceased and food to the cemetery. Many spend the day there praying, talking about their deceased loved ones and eating. The atmosphere is a mixture of respectful solemnity and festivity. Parents take their children to buy toys that teach them about death. Morales said, "Kids are taught to laugh at death, to make fun of it and also to respect the dead."

In contrast to the festive aspects of the Mexican tradition, "The Day of the Dead" is practiced with more solemnity in Panama. Sol Crespo, a sophomore at the University, explained that the tradition in Panama is a very serious, quiet occasion.

"You don't turn on the radio. You have to be quiet," said Crespo.

Crespo described "The Day of the Dead" as a national holiday in Panama and a time when the family members gather and go to the cemetery. She said this tradition occurs on Nov. 2 and ends abruptly and festively on Nov. 3, which is Panama's Day of Independence.

In other countries, the traditions of "The Day of the Dead" are interwoven with Catholic elements that were imported

with the Spanish. Hernando Munoz Gaviria, a student at Lane Community College who grew up in Quito, Ecuador, described the events of the morning of "The Day of the Dead."

"Everyone gets up and goes to mass at 5 a.m. It is called the 'Misa de Gallos' or the 'Mass of the Roosters' because it is so early. There are certain people who volunteer to carry a statue of 'Jesus de Gran Poder.' They wear long black tunics, black cone shaped hats and masks. These people are called 'cucuruchos'."

Gaviria said he believes these people volunteer to carry the statue because they see it as a form of penitence or cleansing.

"Other people dressed in purple tunics, hats and masks walk along carrying rosary beads, praying and sprinkling incense," Gaviria said.

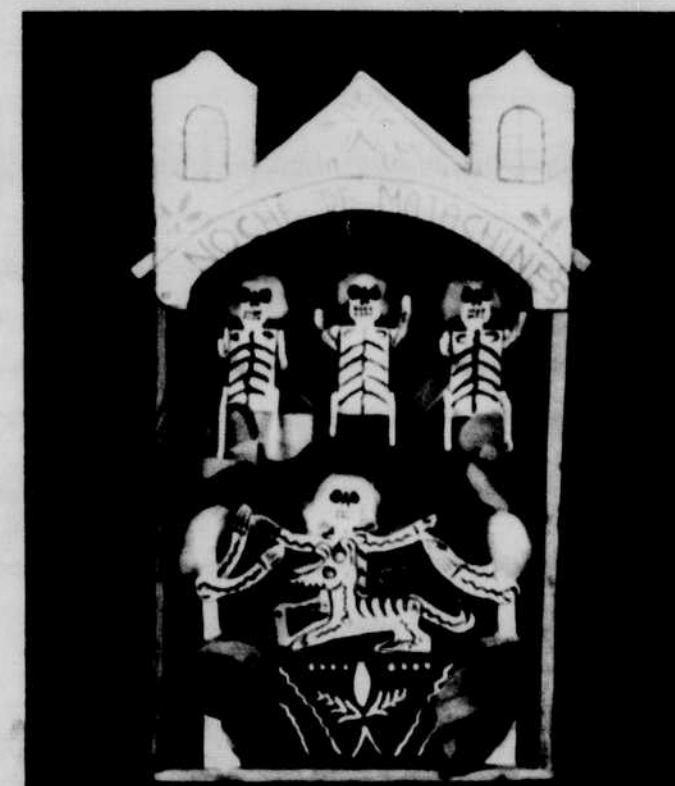
They spend the day cleaning and decorating the cemetery with flowers. They picnic there and some bring priests with them. Gaviria described some of the food they prepare especially for the occasion.

"They prepare guaguas de pan, which is bread made in the shape of babies. They are flat and are decorated with colors. They also make colada morada, which is a thick, fruity, purple drink consisting of pineapple, blueberries, corn starch, water and milk."

Gaviria reflected on the Ecuadorian tradition: "Now that I am far away, I can see that it was valuable. You have something that is yourself. It belongs to you. You cannot appreciate the magnitude of the event at a young age."

In Costa Rica, there are several masses held on "The Day of the Dead" if it does not fall on a Sunday. Also, Olger Palma, an MBA student from San Jose, said there is a special edition of the newspaper that contains an obituary section that lists all people who died that year.

Palma explained that it used to be common practice for people to cook at home and also to go to mass. Now most people must choose one or the other due to time constraints.



Folk art piece from the exhibition, "Death and Fiesta: Day of the Dead in Oaxaca, Mexico," on display through Dec. 23 at the University's Museum of Natural History.

Costa Ricans traditionally do not eat in the cemetery as part of the celebration of the day. As in the case of the Mexicans, they do teach their children about death.

"Death is just a matter of life. We don't laugh about it but we don't ignore it either. Death is not something to hide,"

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Three Day Stubble (above) play their self-proclaimed "nerd rock" tonight at the WOW Hall along with Hitting Birth, My Name and D.J. Lebowitz.

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