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ENTERTAINMENT

'Alternative' tour to hit Portland

The Soul Asylum/Screaming Trees/Spin Doctors concert has canceled its Eugene date; however, the tour will play a show in Portland.

The concert, which is being sponsored by MTV's Alternative Nation, is 5:30 p.m. next Monday at the Portland Meadows. General admission tickets are \$21 each.

The bands are apparently representative "alternative" bands, whatever "alternative" means. They are "alternative" maybe because they have: a) been spon-

sored MTV's Alternative Nation; By John Fleischli

b) all have had videos on Alternative Nation or its forerunner 120 Minutes; and c) have a conspicuous lack of "production" on their albums.

'Alternative" used to mean something more. For example, a couple of adjectives that could be applied to this type of band would seem to be 'unusual" or "out-of-the-mainstream." If so, these bands could not be considered "alternative.

Soul Asylum, Screaming Trees and Spin Doctors have all been signed to major labels and can be heard on commercial radio. What makes them "alternative." then? Maybe one can only say that they once were "alternative." Or possibly one should say the Spin Doctors, Screaming Trees and Soul Asylum are "alternative" bands that have arrived or "made it big."

It definitely can be said today that these bands are no longer challenging the music establishment - as if there ever really was a single, homogenous "establishment." They now are the "establish-

Soul Asylum hails from Minneapolis, where there was a great music scene in the early 1980s.

In a recent Rolling Stone cover story on them, the band's rise to prominence is discussed.

According to the article, the band drove around the country for several years to its playing dates, sleeping on strangers' floors afterwards. Soul Asylum is a band that has toured hard over the last decade, making a name for itself.

The band now sells plenty of records. The most recent effort, Grave Dancers Union, which includes such hits as "Somebody to Shove," 'Black Gold" and "Runaway Train" has gone platinum. With this tour, the music will be brought to the attention of even more people.

Another band that has achieved commercial success in the past year is the Spin Doctors, the headliners of the tour. The group, which plays bluesy rock, is said to be a part of the "New Dead"

This is because, like the perennial Grateful Dead, they have a penchant for playing extended jams at their shows. Having all been trained in jazz, they enjoy the improvisation of these jams. They will surely play some songs from their album Pocketful of Kryptonite.

The third band to be making the Alternative Nation tour is the Northwest's own Screaming Trees. They have had several albums on independent labels, including three on the SST label and one on the home-of-the-grunge Sub Pop label. According to the *Trouser Press Record Guide*, the group "specializes in droning melodic rock tunes spotlighting ... portentous vocals and ... inventively primitive guitar work."

It is too bad this tour is not stopping in Eugene, but if you want to see three bands in their prime then plan a trip to Portland.

LaTour album full of hot techno

LaTour is a bold new group hot out on the techno scene.

Their album Home On the Range is a potpourri of hot dance tracks soon to be playing on dance floors everywhere. Those techno enthusiasts who are looking for something completely innovative and interest-

By Erik Norwood

ing will certainly find it here. Every track starts out simple: a single track-rhythm leads to another, then another, until something new completely takes

The album is programmed very well with an opener "Following You" — that reaches you and takes hold from the first synthesized beat.

Later songs provide a source of upbeat, energetic music, enjoyable at the club or at home. For instance, the fourth track on the album - "The Cure is



LaTour

Found" - contains a melody that is hauntingly familiar and is easy to grasp as well - certainly a chart-topper.

After pulling through a mirage of very new styles and modes. the ninth track comes along. "Jungle Beats" is a spicy, almost Latin, dance track. Yet the familiarity is the use of choral voic-

use of orchestral instrumentation - a throwback to the disco pop genre of the 1970s.

Closing the album is a ballad to bring some heartfelt emotion into the mix. Next up, as a bonus to compact disc buyers, the CD includes remixes of "Craziaskowboi" and "Don't

Vocalist Shawn Christopher is featured on "Run Away With Me." He adds a je ne sais crois to the track. The driving rhythms are superbly accentuated and then augmented with his vocal melody, as he is accompanied with harmonically rich back-up vocalists. Throughout the album are stimulating solos, such as Mars Williams on saxophone on the first track.

When all is said and done, the only thing that can truly be said about the album is that it must be experienced to be appreciated - don't just take my word for



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