

Cross-cultural jazz artists create musical fiesta with debut release

Kim Weiss
Oregon Daily Emerald

Three accomplished musicians — a saxophone and clarinet virtuoso, a steel pan legend and marimba/vibes master — have created a musical fiesta with The Caribbean Jazz Project.

Paquito D'Rivera, Andy Narell and Dave Samuels began in the summer of 1993, and soon after they signed on to their self-titled debut release.

The recording also includes the talents of Dario Eskenazi on piano, Oscar Stagnaro on bass, Luis Conte on percussion and Mark Walker on drums.

Each person has a different musical background, having gotten a lot of influence from the Caribbean and Latin styles blended with the art of jazz. Bringing their own styles and knowledge into the group, they transform the entire recording into a magically mixed composition.

D'Rivera has established himself as the premier woodwind player and Latin jazz icon ever since his defection from Cuba to the United States, which is evident from his style of bebop, "South of the Border music" and Mozart. D'Rivera's saxophone



Caribbean Jazz Project
Caribbean Jazz Project
★★★★

solos add a nice polish to the accompanying instruments and give a wonderful jazz twist to the music.

Narell is one of the best known steel pan players/composers and a master of the trade, in the United States and the founding country of steel pan, Trinidad. He combines three important elements in his excellent steel pan sounds: jazz, Afro-Caribbean and symphonic steel pan, all quite pleasing to the ears.

Samuels has been recognized as the most versatile vibes and marimba player/composer in jazz. In addition to The Caribbean Jazz Project, Samuels has been a solid member of Spyro Gyra, and has proven his abilities on four solo projects. Samuels' marimba beats and improvisations combine for a festive Caribbean touch on the recording.

The rhythm section, of piano, bass, percussion and drums, keeps the music upbeat and grooving, even on the ballad or waltz selections. The listeners can get on their feet and dance or sit and swing with the smooth-flowing melodies.

The Caribbean Jazz Project will release its debut recording in late June. The group will be performing at the Cuthbert Amphitheater, in Alton Baker Park, on Wednesday at 7 p.m. Admission is \$10 in advance and \$12.50 on the day of the show.

Rock 'n' roll bands will play at benefit for local musician

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Music brings people together. When one musician encountered an obstacle, others offered their help. Great rock 'n' roll hands from Eugene have put together a benefit concert for Eagle Park Slim, a local musician slowed down by open-heart surgery.

Gary Brittain, of Eclectic Tracks Company, said the idea developed when a bunch of rock 'n' roll musicians talked about Slim's circumstances. They knew a blues benefit show had been done for him, and they wanted to do something for Slim, as well.

"They said it was a shame [the musicians of] rock 'n' roll didn't do a benefit," Brittain said.

So Brittain approached Slim about the idea of the show; arrangements were made, regarding the concert and an album to be produced. Brittain will contribute his recording studio services to produce an album for Slim, and the proceeds from the benefit concert will go toward the cost of printing CDs.

Three of Eugene's finest rock 'n' roll-style bands, Etouffee, Phamous

Phases and Lost Creek, will perform at the benefit at the WOW Hall on Thursday night.

"Slim will play guitar, harmonica and sing on the album, along with a dozen different local bands — one band per song," Brittain said.

The three bands that will play at the concert have also been selected to play on the album. Nine bands remain to be chosen for the album. Brittain and Slim are looking for the best local bands that are interested and appropriate for this project.

The production will begin when Slim is healthy and ready, which means it could start by the end of the summer. Coordination of musicians' schedules and many hours of studio time will not allow the project to become an immediate creation. But they aim to start recording in the fall or winter, and the finished product could be ready as early as next spring.

So come to the rock 'n' roll benefit for Slim on Thursday night at 8:30 at the WOW Hall, located at 291 W. 8th Ave. Admission is \$6 to \$10, on a sliding scale.

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