

MASQUERADE BALL

The Eugene Hilton Ballroom is the place to be on Halloween

By Les Zaczek
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It's Halloween night and you're considering going to a couple of parties and stopping by a friend's house. You're not quite sure where the most happening spot is, so you're just going to check out a little bit of everything.

Well, save yourself some walking on a cold autumn night because on Halloween the best party in town will be the Psychedelic Halloween Masquerade Ball at the Eugene Hilton Ballroom. What makes this event so exciting?

The Psychedelic Halloween Ball is a costume party that will feature five great bands, a multimedia show as a visual background to the music, a costume contest and a vendor's fair.

The show will begin with Zero, a San Francisco-based band that plays

psychedelic jazz rock. The group will perform its tasty blend of songs, which were written in part by the Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter.

This six-piece outfit consists of great Bay area musicians, such as bassist Bobby Vega, whose career includes playing with the Sly and Family Stone, Etta James and Joan Baez, who bring years of playing experience with them.

Next on the bill is local band Calobo, who will play their special zest of danceable folk rock. The band has been playing their acoustic groove sound at various locations, including the Portland Folk Festival and the Willamette Valley Folk Festival.

Recently, the band has been on an extensive tour and has been selling out more than 80 percent of their shows. Calobo has also recently released an album, *Running with the River*, that has been at the top of local charts.

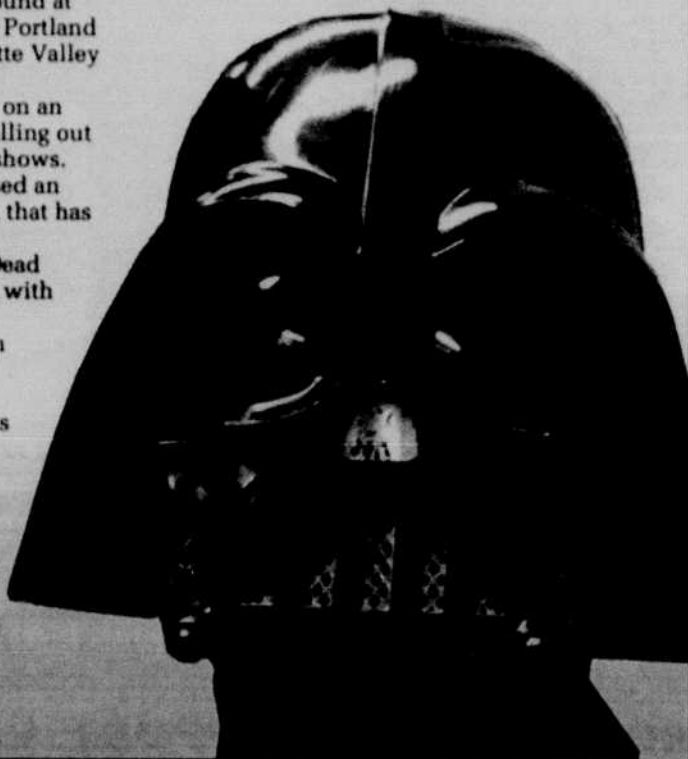
Tom Constanten, the former Grateful Dead keyboard player, will do a solo show, providing us with a display of musical mastery and a good groove. Constanten will play an eclectic mix of sounds from his extensive musical career.

Higher Ground will hit the stage with their own blend of fired-up acoustic backroots rock. While this Portland foursome hasn't been together for as long as some of the other bands on the bill tonight, they will draw from some 50 original songs that they have written.

This energetic group is known for a great live show, playing with a variety of instruments such as the banjo, the mandolin and even the fiddle.

If this is not enough, Artis the Spoon

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Grunge culture on the way out

In business there are market indicators which may signal changes in consumer behavior. Certain indicators can be used to determine the short term outlook for travel, retail clothing, housing starts, etc.

That's why a certain announcement recently on the CNBC television business channel caught my attention. It said orders from retail clothing stores for the holidays have been tilted more toward preppy styles and away from the grunge look that has been experiencing brisk business on the back of the alternative music phenomenon.

Another possible indicator to catch my attention is the rise of artists like Alanis Morissette and her danceable hit single, "You Outta Know"

on the Billboard charts. In the concert industry, Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails fame has teamed up with David Bowie for a tour.

Does all this spell the end of grunge music and its pop culture? God, I hope so!

I had begun to wonder if I would see the end of the three chord bandwagon while I'm still old enough to stage dive. As Butthead would say, let me count the ways in which this sucks.

First, it takes no talent to play. Any first year guitar student could play Courtney Love's rhythm parts in Hole.

The demise of grunge means real musicians can get jobs again.

Second is the hypocrisy of the alternative movement. Denizens of this counter-culture speak of peace, conservation, and liberalism; but where were all these neo-hippies in the 1994 election that gave Republicans the majority in the legislature with which to turn back the clock on environmental laws and civil liberties?

Three. Alternative to what? Flannel shirts, baggy jeans, and Nirvana albums are the mainstream. If corporate America spends billions to package it and promote it, and then you buy it, you are part of the mainstream yourself.

Indicators of a commercial decline in grunge music and fashion mean either people are finally beginning to catch on to the fact that the alternative movement is nothing but a well-marketed fad, or people are just plain losing interest in a genre that never had much substance to begin with.

ON THE SCENE



Ted Hinds

Ted Hinds is an entertainment columnist for the Emerald.