

# Hummingfish release shows potential

By Les ZacZek  
Freelance Reporter

Hummingfish is a band that is staying with the "positive groove." Compared to The Sugar Beets, this Portland group isn't grounded as deeply in the hippie-jam aesthetic; rather, they seem to be going more in the direction of catchy pop songs and a faster, tighter groove.



## REVIEW Love Traktor and Other Songs

Hummingfish

★★★

Playing: April 26 at  
WOW Hall, 9:30 p.m.

"Chocolate." This song cracks me up, but it seems more appropriate for Nickelodeon than for a rock album.

Check out the lyrics: "Many flavors fine and good. And great are some. Say chocolate, say ever-yum. Especially when it's made in Belgium, uh-

On the opening track of *Love Traktor and Other Songs*, "Wistful Fall," the lead singer Deb Talan belts out a haunting melody that isn't far from slower Cowboy Junkies material. From there, Hummingfish speeds up the pace with "Shad-ow."

By the third title track, "Love Traktor," the band heads into the direction of quirky pop. It's like a cross between the B'52s' "Love Shack" and the Meat Puppets.

Unfortunately, Hummingfish goes too far into the quirky territory with



COURTESY PHOTO

Mark Buchanan, Jeff Inlay, Andrew McGough and Deb Talan (in no particular order) are Hummingfish.

huh... Covered peanuts raisins hazel Mary full of berries."

"She" is a touching tune with some great lyrics and a catchy melody. Songs like this make up for the weaker material.

The real strength of Hummingfish lies in the vocal work of Deb Talan. The band also does a good job of providing some good jams, especially with the bass and the guitars.

This band has a lot of potential, and they have written some truly good material. If only they would get rid of the cheesier stuff and focus their sound a little more, Hummingfish could find themselves swimming in a clearer stream. In concert this band should provide to be thoroughly danceable and entertaining.

## Music: 'In Your Dream' plagued by monotony

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The Sugar Beets album *In Your Dream* starts with "Let's Do It," a peppy song that begins with a pleasant piano riff. Then the fiddle kicks in, along with the rest of the band, and the listener is assaulted with some of the most cliché folk lyrics I've heard in a while:

"We've got a whole wide world of work to do but we've got the time and we've got the crew. Let's do it, oh let's do it. Let's get on with the work, boys

and girls, let's do it."

You get the point.

At times the band manages to pull off something good, like "The Shoreless Sea," a beautiful song that reminds me a bit of 10,000 Maniacs with a male vocal.

"Sugar Baby" is a good tune with some really funky instrumental work and great vocal harmonies. In "Sad Eyes," Brianna Basset exercises her country-style vocals over a nice melody.

My personal favorite on this album is the quirky "Broadway," which brings back the great era of swing, complete with a horn section and some wonderful jazz sounds.

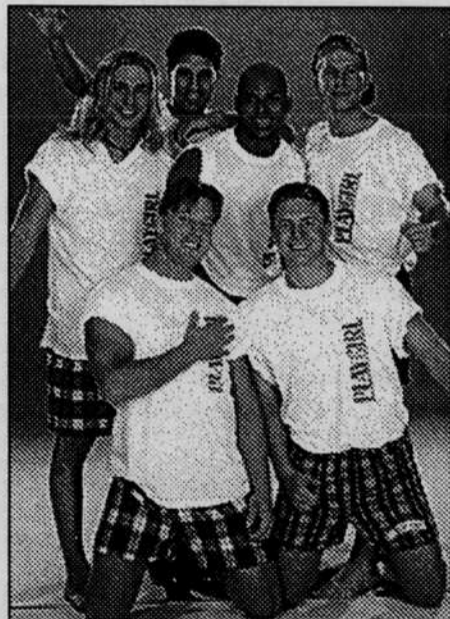
But overall The Sugar Beets are plagued by the monotony of the folk-rock sound that puts the listener to sleep.

Perhaps a live performance with the help of illicit substances would make this band sound exciting, but on CD it's just too dull.

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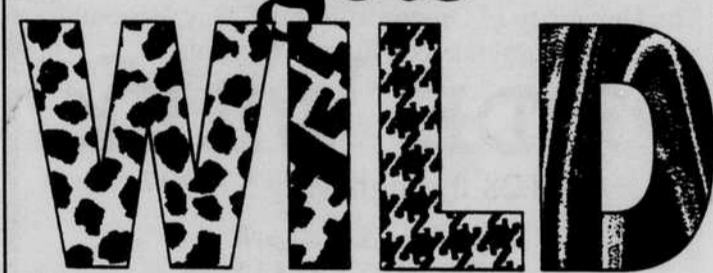
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