



COURTESY PHOTO

The Lucky 7 Swing Ensemble won first place in a music contest on 'Late Night with Conan O'Brien.'

Lucky 7 to swing into Valentine's Day

The all-University-student band will perform at WOW Hall on Feb. 14

By Shannon Sneed
Entertainment Reporter

Stop what you're doing right now. Stop picking out roses at the flower stand, put the box of chocolates back, cancel your dinner reservations and return "Fatal Attraction," because the real fun to be had on this joyous holiday weekend is at WOW Hall.

The Lucky Seven Swing Ensemble, a local band that has been tearing up both the local and national swing scene these days, will give their first headlining performance at the St. Valentine's Dance this Saturday. Johnny Voodoo, also a local band, will perform as well.

The Lucky Seven formed two years ago as a ska band named The Scandals, but since then they've changed their name, added two new members and developed a new style that blends '40s swing with contemporary jazz sounds. They list Glen Miller, The Count Basie Orchestra and Dean Martin as their biggest influences.

"It's really a different band now," said lead singer and guitarist Marcus Congleton. "We added two new horn players and we've written ten new songs, and we've really progressed to more of a swing sound."

Since these changes, the Lucky

Seven have been successfully stirring up a buzz everywhere they go. Locally, they've won first place in "Battle of the Bands" contests at both the Eugene Celebration and at the Portland Rose Festival. Nationally, they won first place in a music contest on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien." Not a bad start for a fledgling swing band from Eugene, eh?

Congleton said the band is also planning on recording a couple of albums for an independent label in California in the near future.

"[The experience] should be much more upscale and professional than what we're used to," he said.

As one of the most popular bands in town, the Lucky Seven have certainly noticed the recent craze over swing music, but they're trying not to cater to the trend, Congleton said.

"It's definitely a fad that's going to die out," he said. "It's a cool scene, and it's good because a lot of people come to our shows, but I don't want to rise and fall with that trend. We'll definitely still be playing when the craze is over."

For many fans of the Lucky Seven, the best part is getting the chance to tear up the dance floor at the band's shows. The popular ballroom dance classes at the University have also helped stir up the recent interest in swing music, Congleton said.

Other members of the ensemble, all of whom are University

students, include Andrew Hoglund on trumpet, Nathan Shaw on tenor sax, Matt Shevits on baritone sax, Greg Goebel on keyboards, Randy Rolofson on drums and Josh Briton on bass.

Opening for The Lucky Seven is Johnny Voodoo, a local band whose "high octane Americana rock 'n roll" is influenced by such bands as The Reverend Horton Heat, Social Distortion and The Stray Cats. Members of the trio are Joshua James on guitar and lead vocals, Kasey Rajkoovic on drums and Clark Cruz on bass.

Tickets for the St. Valentine's Dance are \$5 at the door. Doors open at 9 p.m., and the show starts at 9:30.

But the chance to do the jitterbug isn't the only reason to head to the WOW Hall this weekend. Ubiquitous and eminently popular Portland band The Five Fingers of Funk, whose unique sound is a blend of hip-hop, funk and jazz, will perform tonight.

"We're like James Brown's band with a rapper and some jazz influence," frontman Pete Miser said in an interview.

The band has been around since 1992, and they're currently working on a follow-up album to 1994's "Slap Me Five," which met with critical and commercial success.

The band will perform at 9:30 tonight. Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door, and the show welcomes all ages.

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