



WEEKEND SPOTLIGHT

■ Sam Bond's Garage will host a night of acid jazz on Saturday beginning at 9:30 p.m. Habaneros open the set, followed by Eric Barber at 11 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$1 to \$5.

■ If you hadn't heard already, Black Lab joins Fuel and the Mayfield Four at the WOW Hall tonight at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$8 at the door.

■ The Oregon Bach Festival reaches its peak this Saturday at the Hult Center's Silva Hall with the World Premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's "Credo." Tickets range from \$18 to \$38.50, but students can get in for \$10.

■ The Willamalane Parks and Recreation District will host no less than three events in the coming week, beginning with the Oregon Tuba Ensemble in concert at Island Park in Springfield at 6:30 p.m. tonight. Saturday features the Children's Celebration at 10 a.m., while Etouffee will perform Cajun rhythm and blues Tuesday at 6 p.m.



EVERYTHING'S GETTING DARKER

By Michael Hines
Editor in Chief

Paul Durham's lab is in the mind.

A 1990 Oberlin College philosophy graduate, Durham is now better known as the lead singer and guitarist for the San Francisco band Black Lab.

Six months into touring in support of its debut album, the band will perform with Fuel and The Mayfield Four tonight at the WOW Hall. But playing in Oregon isn't exactly a road trip for Durham, who spent a summer during his college years living with his girlfriend in Eugene. He paid the bills at the time by working landscaping.

"I loved Eugene," Durham says of that summer, years before his videos ran on MTV. "It was perfect weather. It was awesome."

Now, instead of paying to see Durham sing behind a lawn mower, Eugene will pay to see him belt out tunes on stage.

Durham, who was raised a Buddhist in the traditionally Mormon town of Twin Falls, Idaho, has trouble describing the band's sound. The band is composed of Michael Belfer on lead guitar, Bryan Head on drums, Durham with vocals and guitar and Geoff Stanfield on bass (pictured above, left to right).

"For me, where I was coming from when we got together is I'm just a big fan of '80s English music," he says. The band always takes it as a compliment when fans say they can hear that influence.

Black Lab brings its unique sound to the WOW Hall tonight

"We're going for that kind of reverbed-out, heavy but atmospheric sound," he says. The band's "three-dimensional" sound lends itself to live performances.

"Like most people, we're harder live than on the album," Durham says. "I think we're getting into the more trancy, moody aspect of the music. Everything's getting kind of darker."

But it's their studio sound that has landed Black Lab two top singles from their first album "Your Body Above Me." "Wash it Away" and "Time Ago" are two distinctly different-sounding songs that have appealed to broad audiences.

"It did seem like the songs that ended up being pursued to the final recording were the darker songs," Durham says. "It's what I was interested in and the guys were interested in. What we ended up with was a dozen pretty much dark love songs."

Early success has already paid off for the band, which recently finished recording a soundtrack song for "Permanent Midnight," a movie due out late in the fall.

Black Lab has always tried to achieve a live sound in the studio, the 6-foot-4 frontman says.

"All of us really loved playing in this band from the beginning playing live," Durham says. "When we went to make this first record, we wanted it to sound live. And that sound has evolved a lot."

The band is pleased with its early success, Durham says.

"I think we're doing really great for a first record," he says. "The whole record business is so desperate and insane right now. But everybody still needs music."

Black Lab toured with Our Lady Peace, Cracker and Days of the New before teaming up with Fuel, who currently have a top single, "Shimmer."

But it is another band that is the music of choice for Black Lab.

"Radiohead is the best band in the world," Durham says. "We all kind of listen to them in awe. That would be our dream tour." Black Lab will do some solo headlining gigs and radio festivals this summer.

For now, the band is continuing to tour, battling problems like stolen gear in Los Angeles. The next battle will be over their third single. Geffen Records and radio station managers are asking for one thing, Durham says, and the band wants another.

"The people who really kind of know what a single is point towards 'She Loves Me,'" he says.

Turn to **BLACK LAB**, Page 8

Black Lab gives impressive performance in its debut

The band mixes its wide-open guitar riffs with Paul Durham's soulful voice to produce a thought-provoking album

By Michael Hines
Editor in Chief

Simply listening to Black Lab's two radio singles barely scratches the surface of the band's musical and emotional depth.

Currently touring in support of its debut album "Your Body Above Me," Black Lab has sent its first two singles to the top of the music charts. "Wash it Away," the first single, is a hard-rocking song about self-cleansing after a bad relationship. The band's current single is "Time Ago," a mellow ballad about the wonders of young love.

It's rare that a young band can achieve success with two early singles that sound so different, but Black Lab has managed the feat with this first album, produced by David Bianco.

Kicked off by the radio-friendly sound of "Wash it Away," the album provides vocalist Paul Durham with a forum to exhibit his thick, sad voice, sometimes distorted and twisted to fit the songs. Durham slides his rhythm guitar under the wide-open notes coming from Michael Belfer's lead guitar. Geoff Stanfield's solid bass grounds the band's sound well.

This amazing album shows flashes of pure brilliance, which is to be expected with a songwriter like Durham, who graduated from college with a philosophy degree.

"She Loves Me," "Can't Keep the Rain" and "Anything" capture the desperate feelings life often deals out. As one of the most moving songs on the album, "Anything" deals with the fragility of relationships. "It could have been anything/any gesture or

word/maybe something I misstated/something she misunderstood," Durham laments in the song.

Love songs like "Ten Million Years" and others such as "X-ray" and the popular single "Time Ago" are not the best tracks on the album, but they can still stand alone as impressive songs. The album gives a powerful feeling of darkness and despair, but it also lets a few rays of light shine through.

The ninth track, "All the Money in the World," was originally a P.J. Harvey demo that Durham had access to. He rewrote some of the music and lyrics and produced a song that stands out, even on a diverse album like "Your Body Above Me."

The album is especially impressive for a young band. The songs aren't tight and regimented. Rather, they sound like a veteran band that recognizes its freedom to experiment with the sonic open spaces.

Black Lab has produced an album that is unlike any other that is currently getting airplay. And they have more to offer than a surface radio hit.

CD REVIEW

Your Body Above Me

Black Lab

■ **STYLE:**
Atmospheric Rock

■ **RATING:**

★★★★★



COURTESY