

What's that sound? It's just the Dead

By Yael Menahem
Oregon Daily Emerald

Is the moon in the seventh house?

Beginning last night, a Grateful Dead revival has been in effect around Eugene. Three bands that cover the Dead's music are in town, each with their own interpretation or exact replication of Jerry Garcia's sound.

The Zen Tricksters, a band known for its long live jams, has its own interpretation of the Dead's music and has released two CDs, most recently "A Love Surreal." The Tricksters played the EMU Ballroom Wednesday night.

The Dark Star Orchestra, which performs Grateful Dead songs using the original set list as a template for its own improvisation, has been touring the country for over two years, building a steady following of over 6,500 people. Dark Star plays the Wild Duck, 169 W. Sixth Ave., Saturday and Sunday nights.

The third band in town this weekend is String Cheese Incident, which offers a variety of sounds that span from "bluegrass, transcendent Afro-pop rhythms, sensuous Latin melodies and breezy Calypso grooves that branch from a trunk of traditional American rock," according to a press release.

SCI plays the ballroom at the Eugene Hilton tonight and Friday night.

Ray Sewell, owner of Chez Ray's North Beach and one-time chef for the Grateful Dead, isn't too surprised that all these bands are coming to Eugene in one week.

"I think we've become main-

stream, the whole scene, especially in Eugene," he says.

There's talk of a couple of late night jams by the Zen Tricksters and the String Cheese Incident at his restaurant, which has featured numerous other bands that are considered part of the Grateful Dead family.

There's a common bond among these bands that have attracted them to the Dead's music, he says, and has led them to dedicate their music to the band.

Zen Tricksters' keyboardist Rob Barraco says that although his band is influenced by the Grateful Dead, it's created original songs that are only inspired by the Dead music.

"We've never really been a cover band," he says. "But the thing that attracted us to do the Grateful Dead ... the songs were so open-ended."

Audiences in the Northwest are especially welcoming to bands such as Dark Star Orchestra and The Zen Tricksters.

"Audiences in the Northwest are some of the best in the country," Barraco says. "They're real open-minded; they have the right spirit for this kind of music."

Even though the Grateful Dead and other bands of that time were going against the mainstream, today their music is popular and being embraced by different people.

"It's a cultural thing that's not restricted to the Grateful Dead," Sewell says.

Sewell also feels that "it's a sign of what to come. We've come full circle in a cycle, and the cycle is now being jet-propelled into the next cycle."



String Cheese Incident (above) and the Zen Tricksters (below) are in a jamming mood. Courtesy String Cheese Incident



Courtesy The Zen Tricksters

"That's all, [just] simple physics," he concludes.

The String Cheese Incident is appearing tonight and Friday at the Hilton Ballroom. The show starts at 8 p.m. and doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$16 in advance,

\$18 at the door. This is a 21-and-over show.

The Dark Star Orchestra performs at the Wild Duck on Saturday and Sunday at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$11 in advance and \$13 the day of the show.

WOW Hall is appropriate venue for Doty's return

By Jack Clifford
Oregon Daily Emerald

One week before the Grammy Award winners were announced Feb. 23, Berkeley, Calif., musician Shelley Doty was hobnobbing at a party for nominees from the San Francisco Bay area.

Those who know their music history can guess who was in the crowd.

"I felt very fortunate to be in the same room with Carlos Santana and sharing hors d'oeuvres," Doty says, referring to the legendary guitarist who began receiving critical praise in 1966, thanks to his blistering live shows at venues such as Fillmore West in San Francisco. Santana toted home nine Grammys for his 1999 release "Supernatural."

Doty admits that to be even mentioned in the same sentence as Santana is an honor. Anyone who has ever seen the woman whale on her guitar, however, notices a similarity between the two rockers.

Eugene music lovers usually flock to Doty's local shows — she's twice been named top female musician in the annual WOW Hall awards — and that appreciation is reciprocated.

"I'm chomping at the bit to come back to the WOW Hall," she says. Saturday night she and her fans get that opportunity to reacquaint themselves. The Shelley Doty X-Tet headlines an evening of jazzy jam-rock, with Seattle sax trio The Living Daylights opening.

Longtime Doty enthusiasts will be interested to know that the "X-Tet" portion of her band — always a revolving door of talented musicians sitting in to jam with Doty — is now a permanent rhythm section, with Mike Sugar on bass and Brian Knave on drums.

The band's transformation be-

gan in late 1999, and Doty says, "We made a pact on New Year's Eve." The solidarity translates to better playing, she continues, because a near ESP connection is now in place.

"There's sort of a mind read, a sort of telepathy that creates kind of a sublime sound," Doty says, then elaborates on how she, Sugar and Knave communicate on stage. "Sometimes the audience doesn't know we're improvising. People will say, 'Wow, is that a new song?' I say, 'Well, no, we just made it up right then.'"

Doty's been making solid music for some time — she was a founding member of the popular West Coast band Jambay, in addition to occasionally filling the lead guitar spot for Pele Juju — and has released two CDs on her own mini-label, Howlin' Music.

Her first full-length, self-produced album, "Possible Reasons for My Insomnia," came out last July and critics fell over themselves raving about its excellence. Doty's devotion to her craft comes through live or recorded.

"Music is magical in how it connects with people — there are so many things pulling people apart these days," Doty says, sounding very Santana-like in her drift toward the more spiritual aspects of playing music. "I feel so young musically, but part of the maturation process is to check in with the instruments and the band and transduce that energy into wowing the crowd."

With the now-crystallized situation concerning X-Tet, Doty is no longer solely responsible for coming up with the band's sound.

"To be able to sit down with Mike and Brian, compose songs and write music — having that freshness is crucial," Doty says, without forgetting her final goal. "They call this playing music, not



Courtesy of Shelley Doty

Now that the X-Tet part of Shelley Doty's band is a permanent fixture, the musician can shift more focus on doing what she does best: whaling on that guitar.

working music. It's just a joy to get up there and play.

"Jamming will be had at the WOW Hall; that's for sure."

Asher Fulero of Eugene's Habañeros will sit in as guest keyboardist for about half of SDX's set. The Living Daylights kick off the night's session, no doubt performing a lot of songs from their second CD, "500 Pound Cat."

The WOW Hall is located at 291 W. Eighth Ave. Admission to the show is \$6 and the music begins at 9:30 p.m.

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