

Jimi Hendrixes of the harp world unite



Courtesy of Electric Angel

Electric Angel, a female electric harp trio made up of Lynne Reardon, Midyne Spear and Jill Meniketti, sport colorful instruments as a visual element to their performance.

■ The artists in Electric Angel use their electric harps to generate a unique sound

By Josh Ryneal
Oregon Daily Emerald

Forget cherubim floating around the puffy clouds of heaven, strumming adorable little harps.

These angels rock. Lynne Reardon, Midyne Spear and Jill Meniketti are Electric Angel, the world's first all-female electric harp trio, and will make their Oregon debut at Eugene's Tsunami Books on Sunday.

The trio plays multi-colored harps custom-made in France, which resemble electric guitars in some ways. "We love harps as well as electronic gadgetry," Meniketti said. "We wanted to stretch the instrument itself as well as expand the notion of what the harp can do."

The Angels got their start a little more than two years ago, when Meniketti's husband suggested forming an electric harp trio and "trying something new."

"We wanted to break the stereotype of the angelic harpist with the long, flowing gown," Meniketti said. "We're kind of like Jimi Hendrix, who expanded the idea of the electric guitar. We have expanded the idea of the harp."

The electric harps differ from traditional ones in both their construction and design. They are shaped

like traditional Celtic harps but don't have a hollow soundbox. They also have electric pickups like an electric guitar.

"Because they're amplified, we have a lot of control over the volume and sound," Reardon said.

The harps plug into a standard guitar amplifier, which allows them

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Jill Meniketti
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to use sound effect pedals that are made for electric guitars.

Reardon said that although exploring the new, amplified opportunities of the harp is part of the group's appeal, there is a visual impact to their shows as well.

"Part of the act is the visual effect of different-colored harps," she said.

The group plays a number of different styles, including contempo-

rary pop, new age, jazz and even a little rock.

"All three of us are classically trained, but it's hard to put us into one genre. Some of our stuff is new-agey; some of it is poppy stuff," Meniketti said. "It's all turned into something really fun."

The group covers Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground" on their CD, "Electric Angel," and audiences may be surprised to hear the versatility of the instrument.

"My husband discouraged us from doing that, saying the harp 'wasn't funky enough for a Stevie Wonder tune,' but Lynne hooked up a wah-wah pedal [to the harp], and it turned out really good," Meniketti said.

Scott Landfield, co-owner of Tsunami Books, said that the venue's sophisticated sound and recording equipment will help emphasize the performance.

"The back of the store turns into a theater that seats 120 people," he said.

Landfield said Electric Angel's performance marks the beginning of their event season and that people can look forward to many more eclectic events in the future.

"Musically, we like to focus on jazz, acoustic and a certain amount of new age," Landfield said.

The concert will begin at 4:30 p.m., and there is a suggested \$6 donation.

"We don't turn away anybody, though," Landfield said.

Cure those laundry-day blues with some soul food

THE SURLY GOURMET

TONY CHIOTTI

Want to get rid of that stubborn patchouli funk left behind by the last batch of dirt-heads to rent your apartment? Smoke it out. Smoke it out with stinky pork.

Red beans and rice is the quintes-

sential laundry day grubbin'. It'll feed you for a week for less than six bucks, and your place will reek of smoked ham hocks for a month. (That's a good thing.) It takes a couple of hours, but it's not labor intensive. Turn on the radio, whip up a Hot Toddy, sort your whites from your darks, and get ready for some spicy-ass comfort chow.

I recommend using smoked neck bones because they are cheap and meaty, but any smoky, pork-like

substance will due. Ham hocks, ham bones or even bacon will work. Making this dish without one of the above will result in a dish resembling soggy packing peanuts. If you are expecting vegetarians over, well, lemmie give you a bit of free advice: These flatulent folks are not worthy of your sausage, or your hospitality.

Precise measurements of either ingredients or time are unimportant. I attempted to develop a Unified Field Theory of Red Beans and Rice for the purposes of this column — a "recipe" if you will — but what's the point? I mean, you could simply take that list of ingredients, toss it all in a pot, turn the heat to medium and walk away. It would come out great. What follows are a loose set of suggestions that may be ignored at will.

Contrary to popular opinion, beans do not need to soak. Soaking overnight reduces cooking time, but nobody thinks that far ahead. Rinse the beans in several changes of water, drain, transfer to a large stock pot and cover with about five cups of hot water. Toss in the swine-bones, put on the lid and turn the heat all the way up. While you're waiting for it to boil, toss in your socks, underpants and some bleach — into the washer, not the stock pot — then after you've got the laundry going, reduce the heat to low and allow

beans to simmer.

Chop up the veggies and break the sausage up into chunks. In a large sauté pan (or what-have-you), brown the sausage over medium heat for a few minutes. Once the sausage has released all of that luscious fat, toss in the garlic, peppers and onions. Stir this occasionally until the peppers are soft and the onions are browned. Dump in the can of tomatoes and add the bay leaves.

At any rate, I leave the seasoning solely to your discretion. You like spicy? Cayenne, paprika, Tabasco, pepper flakes, pepper spray. Whatever floats your boat. Just remember that dumping hot sauce on top of the finished product is part of the whole experience, so don't press your luck at this early stage.

Let this cook away until you've transferred your socks over to the dryer and started another load. Pull out the bones and let cool. Dump the contents of the sauté pan on top of the beans and stir. After the bones have cooled, pick off the meat, chop and return to the pot. Reduce heat to simmer and cook uncovered until your clothes are dry and folded. Add water if necessary, but you're looking for a nice, thick gravy, not soup.

The rice is easy. Rinse it, then cover with water: two cups water for every one cup of rice. Bring to

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried red beans
- 1 lb. smoked pork neck or ham hocks
- 1/2 lb. Cajun, spicy Italian or chorizo sausage
- 14 1/2 oz. can tomatoes
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 or 2 large red bell peppers, diced
- 4-10 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 cups hot water
- Salt and pepper
- Long-grain white rice

a boil, then reduce heat to low and cover. Stirring releases starches, so don't touch it or you'll muck it all up. Let it cook until the rice is tender and the water is absorbed. Craters will begin forming on the surface when it is getting close.

A little from column A, a little from column B. Badda-boom: red beans and rice. Garnish with green onions, cilantro or parsley, and serve with plenty of hot sauce. And don't spill any down the front of your shirt. It could be months before laundry day rolls around again.

Tony Chiotti is a journalism major. He is a freelancer for the Emerald.

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Comic News

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A paired Scrabble tournament will be held in The Break on Nov. 9th from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Prizes given to all participants. Register beforehand in The Break. \$5.00 per team.



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