

Lesh to play with 'Friends'

Phil Lesh and Friends give Grateful Dead fans musical energy, while combining classical, jazz and rock tunes

By Alix Kerl
Oregon Daily Emerald

For 30 years, Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh usually sang harmonies, wrote only a few songs and assuredly didn't play with his own band on the side.

Now, seven years after Dead frontman Jerry Garcia's death, Lesh brings his own group, Phil Lesh and Friends, to Eugene.

Phil and Friends will play today at 6:30 p.m. in the Silva Hall at the Hult Center. Special guest Galactic will open. Phil Lesh and Friends is promoting "There and Back Again," its debut album.

Ed Kashin, the host of "Short Strange Trip," a Grateful Dead show on KRVM, said he is definitely going to the show. The Dead were known for stretching 4-minute songs to 40-minute epics at their live shows. While Kashin is still a huge fan of the Dead, he also listens to Lesh. He explained that Lesh's musical style is more free-form than the Dead's.

"The style is jazz, classical, rock 'n' roll, Grateful Dead fusion," Kashin said.

Kashin said he feels a sense of happiness when he listens to Phil Lesh and Friends.

"I want to hear all the new songs," Kashin said. "I can't wait to see what they hear like live."

Lesh is a classically trained musician with a knack for jazz and composition who originally played violin and trumpet. In 1965, Lesh joined his friend Garcia's band, the Warlocks, which was soon renamed the Grateful Dead. He remained with the group for its three-decade existence.

After Garcia's death in 1995, Lesh joined with bandmates Bob



Courtesy

Weir and Mickey Hart in the group Other Ones. He then discovered the burgeoning jam band scene led by Bay Area musicians, who were inspired by the music of Grateful Dead. Lesh said he was fascinated to hear the effect of the Dead's inspiration.

"It was strange hearing our music being played by others and for the first time I was able to hear the music from the audiences perspective," Lesh said. "It was certainly an eye-opening experience for me."

For a while, Lesh played with a rotating crew of musicians that he called Phil Lesh and Friends. At various times, the group included Little Feet members Paul Bararre and Bill Payne, Allman Brothers Band guitarist Derek Trucks and Hot Tuna founder Jorma Kaukonen. In 1999, Lesh recorded "Love will See You Through" with some of the people he had been playing with.

Soon after the release, a permanent lineup of Phil and Friends solidified. Phil Lesh and Friends now includes Allman Brothers/Gov't Mule guitarist Warren Haynes, guitarist and Allman Brothers alumni Jimmy Herring, drummer John Molo and keyboardist Ron Barraco.

"There and Back Again" was released May 21, through Lesh's

newly created Lapis Music/Columbia Records label. Lesh said his plan with Lapis is to search out new, vital and uncompromising music, and in partnership with Columbia, bring it to a wider audience. He hopes to do the same thing with his own music.

"I wanted this band to make a record because I wanted to see whether we could translate that energy that we have live, with the on-stage jamming, into compositions for recording, which is really an art in itself," Lesh said of the album.

The band Galactic is coming into its own as a favorite of the jam band scene, though they echo that title.

"Please don't consider Galactic another jam band," Galactic's publicist said.

Galactic came out of New Orleans in the late 1990s and has now produced four albums. They were featured at the Sasquatch Festival at the Gorge Amphitheater with Ben Harper and Jack Johnson over the weekend.

Tickets are \$35 in advance and can be purchased through Safeway/Fastixx or the Hult Center Box Office.

E-mail reporter Alix Kerl at alixkerl@dailyemerald.com.

News brief

Presentation to focus on discrimination issues

The YWCA and the Young Women's Theater Collective will present "A Slice of Life" at 7 p.m. tonight in the EMU Fir Room. The event will address topics such as racism, sexism, ageism, disableism and sexual orientation discrimination.

According to YWCA Racial Justice Advocate Keely Helmick, the

presentation will encompass discrimination issues that people face at school, in the workplace and out in the world on a daily basis.

"The goal of 'A Slice of Life' is to raise awareness about oppression as it relates to different social, racial, gender and economic groups in everyday life and to promote acceptance of all people in our community," Helmick said.

The event will begin with a speech by Bahati Ansari, the founder of the Racism-Free Zone in Eugene and a teacher at Lincoln Middle School.

A presentation by the YWTC will include a theatrical performance created, produced, and performed by the students — all material will come from the unique experiences of the women who put it on, Helmick said. A group discussion for questions and further analysis of the topics will bring the evening to a close.

"If all goes well, we hope to continue the event next year," Helmick said.

Admission is free.

— Caron Alarab

Radio

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Promises unfulfilled

College broadcasters are continuing to lobby Congress and Billington on the rules. Some radio organizations have already reached deals with the recording industry regarding Internet royalties. National Public Radio reached a deal for all 470 of public radio member stations, though they would not disclose terms of the deal. Robinson of KBVR said she has been told by Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc., an organization KBVR belongs to, that they are also trying to negotiate a deal. Jimenez said the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System is also attempting to work out an agreement.

Record companies are also closely watching the debate because they are hard-pressed to keep a high profit margin during a period of declining record sales. They blame much of that decline on music swapping sites made popular by Napster, and

the ability to easily copy music discs on home computers.

Stavitsky also pointed out that the promise of making large sums of money on the Internet has yet to bear fruit. He sees this debate as record companies trying to jockey for the future.

"Very few people are making money off the Web," he said. "But you have to keep doing it because someday somebody will."

E-mail Pulse and features editor John Liebhardt at johnliebhardt@dailyemerald.com.

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