

Taarka bassist finds time for solo album

CD review

Aaron Shakra
Pulse Reporter

James Whiton is a busy man. He's bassist for the band Taarka, and according to his Web site, www.jameswhiton.com, he's also currently involved with three other groups. Not to mention past accomplishments, namely as co-leader of the rock band Apricot Jam. And in spite of all of this, he has found time this year to record and release his own solo disc, "Rhythm & Motion."

The Seattle-based musician's solo project may bear his name, but the music's focus isn't placed entirely on Whiton. Instead of acting as a band leader, he plays host to the

other musicians featured on the disc. Many more prolific, higher-budget albums don't sound as good as "Rhythm & Motion." And much like the Taarka album that Whiton was involved with, the album was recorded all at once, without overdubs. This equates to no second chances — what's there is there, captured forever.

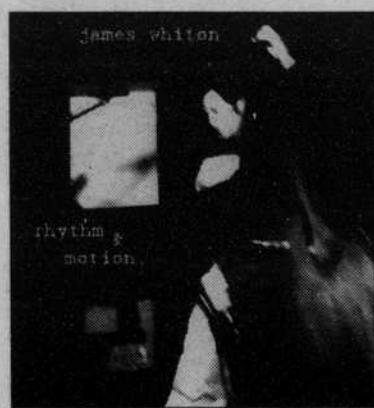
The tracks might be considered "traditional," in that they're mostly a combination of funk, jazz and rock styles. The arrangements are tight, comprised of horns, guitars and keyboards — not to mention Whiton on the double bass. Many are clearly very talented; Lewi O. Longmire on guitar and pedal steel, and Bill Jones on trumpet, among others. The songs alternately feature Whiton's poetry and Longmire

and John Oliver's singing.

One standout is "Ancient Heroes," an eight-minute poetry piece that begins with Whiton's words and occasionally gives way to instrumental interludes (the funk guitar screams here). In a delivery that could be likened to beat or scat, Whiton's poem starts "Smoke crowds the unwashed I / on nights when whiskey swirls / and all the colors run together / and all the beautiful girls / lit up by the neon, winking through the smoke."

The most rhythmically interesting tracks are the appropriately titled "5/4," "6/8" and "7/16 (Michael's Groove)." In mainstream music today, these time signatures seem more and more uncommon.

Unfortunately, the disc is not wide-



ly available, in music stores or otherwise. Interested listeners will have to order it from Whiton's Web site.

Contact the Pulse reporter at aaronshakra@dailymerald.com.

My House

continued from page 7

nates most of the events for the do-it-yourself venue. His graduate research parallels the same "DIY" theme. He said that the idea of do-it-yourself came out of the late 1970s punk-rock movement, and he considers it "completely grassroots."

"There is no other forum in Eugene for this kind of work," Moscato said.

Shoestring budgets, a great amount of independence and an attention to craftsmanship are common themes behind much of the work coming out of the house. Moscato considers the promotional materials — small, silk-screened, hand-collated booklets — pieces of art in themselves.

Citing independent film as an example, Moscato discussed how mainstream artwork has become superficial. What's considered film by mainstream media is frequently a multimillion-dollar picture with a large amount of corporate backing.

"Independent film's a kind of perverted word — it doesn't really mean it's independent," Moscato said.

Moscato has planned anti-war activist rallies in the past, and said that he sees My House as way to bring together community members mutually interested in artistic endeavors. The shows don't exist as venues for one-dimensional purposes — they're a method to create a "strong network of people."

"There needs to be a forum for artwork to be made for people," he said. "I view this work as part of my activism — building relationships with people. It's a method of change."

"It feels like they're coming into a community instead of a venue."

Jesse Garlick
My House home owner

Garlick, who owns the home, is a coordinator and also works the door during events. He said My House was an opportunity just waiting to happen.

"I kind of felt guilty that there was all the extra space," he said.

Garlick also cooks dinner for incoming artists.

"It helps," he said. "It feels like they're coming into a community instead of a venue."

Many of the performers spent the night earlier this year for a show featuring Finnish musicians Aavikko and local band Qui Qui Qui. People camped out on the front lawn, basement, living room and deck.

My House coordinator Kate Wilson is relatively new to the project. A friend of Moscato's, she has helped with promotion by distributing posters and recording a public service announcement that airs on KWVA campus radio. She was involved with the house's "Make It Better" workshop, which enlisted the help of Eugene residents to create a book and interactive exhibit.

"I think it's a constructive way to spend my time," Wilson said.

The "Make It Better" book is on sale at the house, along with a wide selection of homemade zines.

My House also exhibits photography and visual arts. Its most recent event, the "PDX DIY Show" show brought the work of Erin McKillip & Lin Stone to the house's walls. The exhibit will run through November, and also features one of Moscato's art installations.

"Anyone can do this," Moscato said. "It's not hard."

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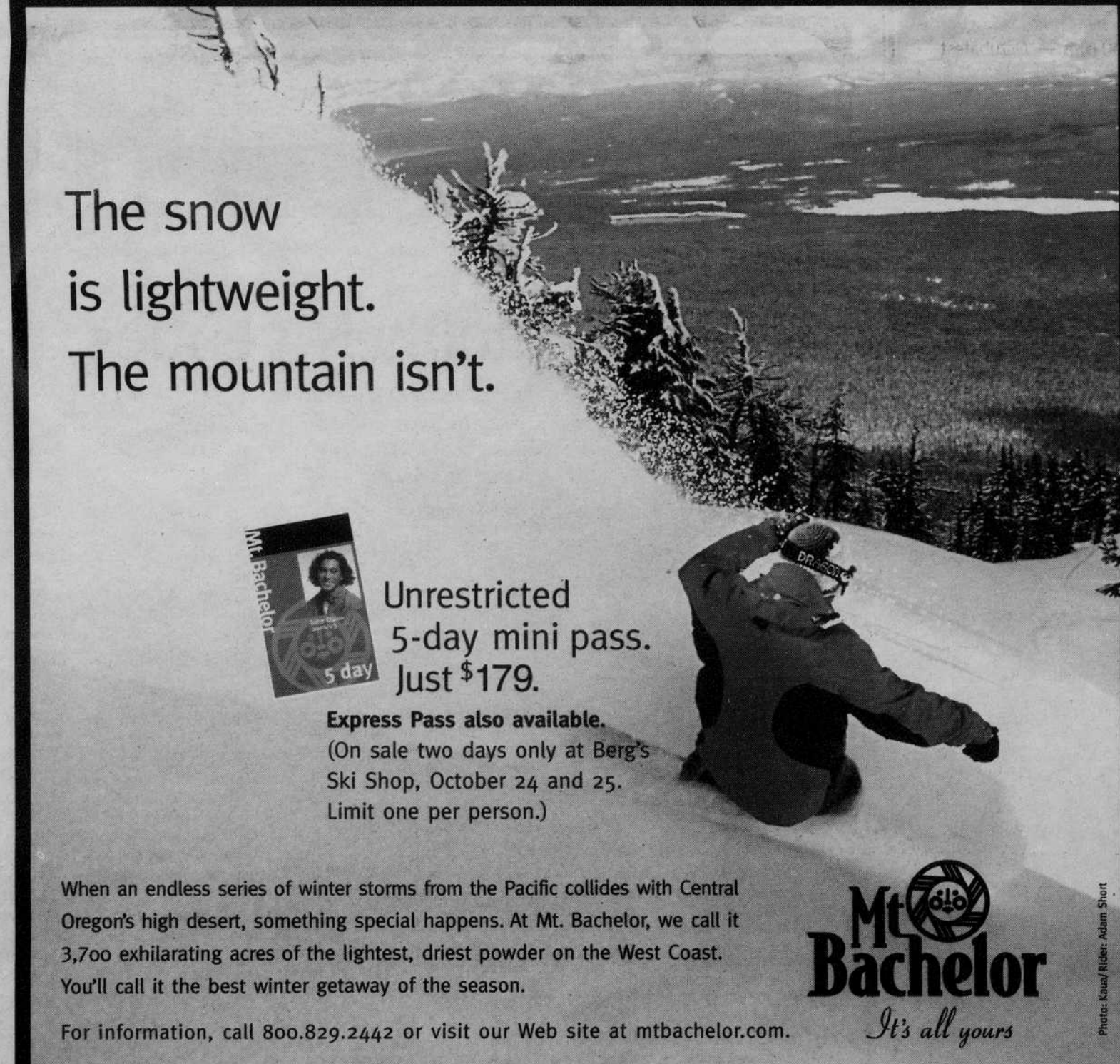
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