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PULSE *Excite*

On Tuesday
Pulse gets earthy

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'American Chopper' revitalizes reality TV

Mason West
Movies/Music/TV Columnist

I thought that reality television was dead — increasingly unoriginal and uninspired, but the spirit of the genre has been reincarnated on a different channel. The greatest reality show ever isn't on FOX or MTV, but on the Discovery Channel.

The intellectual networks have a permanent place in my surfing regimen, albeit a low one. When there's nothing good on the "T" stations (TNT, TBS and TNN), I'm Discovery bound.

The machine shows are giving the smart channels more priority. Shows such as "Junkyard Wars" and "Monster Garage" cater to the grease-head inside all of us. But these competition shows lack the dramatic panache that hooks repeat viewers.

To this end, Discovery found the Teutul family which owns and operates Orange County Choppers (in New York, not California) and created "American Chopper" to fill my vacant 10 p.m. Monday time slot. The show evolved from a September 2002 special with the perfect mix of bicker and biker. They would have been fools to stop the magic.

Paul Teutul Sr. runs the shop like a heated football coach trying to overcome the roar of the crowd. He barks — a term more fitting to his manner of speech than any other man — constantly at his son, Paul Jr., and the other staff. His temper flares on a weekly, if not daily, basis. And when this man is angry, you are afraid. His barrel chest is the kind on which you imagine piling 15 men before yo-ho-ho-ing down a bottle of rum. And the frighteningly large handlebar mustache he sports says, "I could kick your ass by looking at you."

Paul Jr., called Paulie for sanity's sake, withstands his father's tantrums with inspiring patience. The funny thing is that Paulie is the creative visionary behind OCC's outstanding bikes. He is constantly at work, while his father's title should be "Head Ass-Kicker in Charge of Barking."

A big draw to the show is waiting for Paulie to snap. But on Monday's show, the two eased tensions with a touchy-feely talk that had both behemoths sniffling to hold back tears. Everybody cries on the stupid Real World, but when mechanics turn on the waterworks, that's good television!

This was a cathartic moment, but tensions are usually eased with recreational activities such as lighting the lawn on fire with gasoline. One day, Paul Sr. is furious about late parts holding up work. Paulie casually suggests going bowling and Paul Sr. immediately demands everybody



Mason West
Selling out



The Sugar Beets, a nine-member band originally started in the University residence halls, has been producing tunes ranging from folk-rock to pop for 13 years. Courtesy

Sugar-beatific

The Sugar Beets, a blend of folk, rock and bluegrass, return to the local music scene on Saturday with a 're-birthday'

Aaron Shakra
Pulse Reporter

The Sugar Beets have returned. After an extended hiatus, the local band will celebrate its "re-birthday" on Saturday at WOW Hall, located at 291 W. Eighth Ave., — the group's 13th year together.

Doors open for the show at 8:30 p.m. with the performance starting at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance or at the door.

Singer and guitarist Marty Chilla — who has played the instrument for 25 years — said the band originally started in the University residence halls and that some of the members have been playing together for a third of their lives. He added the main theme of Saturday's show is to "remember and recognize that."

He said the band's sound is hard to peg down, and that the band's diversity means The Sugar Beets have a lot of cards to play. The group consists of nine musicians. Five mem-

bers write songs, and six are singers.

"It's definitely danceable, with lots of different voices and perspectives coming out," Chilla said. "We're not a jam band. We're into crafting good songs, harmonies and tight arrangements."

The band's break was instituted so two band members — bassist Matt Keenan and vocalist Megan Bassett — could take time to bring a baby into the world. Over the break, band members have remained busy, playing in other group projects. Chilla said this break has allowed members to reflect on the band's future and direction. The touring schedule has been pared back in recent years because so many members call Eugene their home.

"I would say we've kind of been kind of re-evaluating what we're doing," he said. "Now that Matt and Megan are having a baby, I think we're starting to have dreams for other people besides ourselves."

Violinist David Burham, who has played the instrument for 36 years and also crafts his own, said playing with the band is one of the great joys of his life. He said joining the band provided him with an instant following, some-

thing he never had before.

"I love the band," he said. "The music never fails to lift me up."

University African drumming instructor Brian West — who has also played with The Cherry Poppin' Daddies — is the band's newest member. He said he considers them a family, and happily thinks of it as home. However, due the vast amount of Sugar Beets material, he said he found his role challenging. The band has released five albums, and according to Chilla, has somewhere between 60 and 70 songs.

"I've been in the band a year and I still don't know half the songs," West said. "I'm always on my toes — they have such a vast library."

West matched Chilla's sentiments regarding versatility of the band, saying the style of songs can range from folk-rock to punk-rock, bluegrass to pop. He added that the band also dabbles in different rhythmic meters, including one song which is in a 12/8 rhythm.

The band will open Saturday's show with an all-acoustic set — absolutely no electricity involved — then will play two sets of material,

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Electronica bands Surrounded By Ninjas and kooken & hoomen will be performing on Friday at the Wild Duck Music Hall. Courtesy

Electronica acts serve eclectic 'aural treats'

Bands Surrounded By Ninjas and kooken & hoomen epitomize a wave of ad hoc electronica

Jacquelyn Lewis
Pulse Editor

The first glimmers of electronic music can arguably be traced all the way back to the 1600s (and perhaps even earlier), but electronica as we know it today has its roots in the innovative 1950s and 1960s. With the help of computers, the experimental scene has swelled to popularity in recent years. And now, if artists like Surrounded By Ninjas and kooken & hoomen are any indication, the genre is at the dawn of a new era, where live elec-

tronica catapults experimental sounds to a new level.

Both groups are similar in that each creates eclectic, electric aural treats. They do it live, which is somewhat of an oddity considering electronica's usual extensive production regiment. The groups have each released a new album recently, and they will both perform on Friday at the Wild Duck Music Hall. Beyond this, kooken & hoomen and Surrounded By Ninjas differ wildly in their choices of noise and style.

The term "electronica" cannot encompass all the elements kooken & hoomen cram into their music — jazz, punk and

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