



Courtesy

(Left to right) Guitarist/vocalist Ryan Miller, percussionist Brian Rosenworcel and guitarist/vocalist Adam Gardner make up the band Guster, which will perform at the McDonald Theatre tonight. The band is touring in support of their new album, 'Keep It Together.'

Guster comes back to Eugene as part of its nationwide tour

The band will perform at the McDonald Theatre tonight with the Trachtenburg Family Slide Show Players

By Andrew Shipley
Freelance Reporter

What can you do with a couple of acoustic guitars, a sense of humor and a bongo? Maybe a little more than just annoy your friends, or at least that's what three guys from Boston thought when they decided to start a band called Gus more than 10 years ago.

The trio, currently known and adored by fans nationwide as

CONCERT PREVIEW

Guster, has now recorded four albums and toured with such pop giants as John Mayer and the Bare Naked Ladies. Tonight, Guster will combine vocal harmonies with upbeat guitar riffs to bring what Rolling Stone calls a "bright, folk-pop sound" to the McDonald Theatre.

Less than a year ago, the band played the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland. The McDonald Theatre is a significantly smaller venue, so where the band performs isn't always related to ticket sales.

"Guster is a college band, and they haven't forgot where their fans are at," McDonald Theatre event coordinator Dan Steinberg said. "This is the kind of band that students appreciate, and that's why they're here, because of students."

The band's history is rooted in the collegiate experience. The three members — guitarist/vocalist Ryan Miller, guitarist/vocalist Adam Gardner and percussionist Brian Rosenworcel — all met at their freshman orientation at Tufts University more than 12 years ago. The original creation, Gus, was born in a dorm room the next semester. By the end of each member's junior year, the group had recorded their first album, "Parachute."

The band kept its original acoustic guitar and bongo formula throughout the subsequent decade of touring and recording. However, on their latest album, they have tried to escape this instrumental rut. Those who have seen Guster in concert previously may be surprised at the presence of a drum kit on stage, but Rosenworcel is not turning in the bongos yet.

"He'll only be playing four songs or so on the dream set," Steinberg said.

The addition of the complete drum set is just part of Guster's attempt to expand its musical range

on "Keep It Together." The thoughtful lyrics and pop-guitar riffs that are the Guster staple still form the new album's core.

The excitement among campus Guster fans testifies to the band's touring success. Sophomore Kristin Bray saw Guster for the first time last year and said they were "very cool."

"I wasn't really familiar with their stuff, but they are so good live it didn't matter," she said. "I got my ticket for this show as soon as I heard they were coming."

Sophomore Erin Heineman is a longtime Guster fan and was equally excited.

"Guster is amazing live," she said. "They have kind of mellow music, but the atmosphere when I saw them play wasn't really like that. They were really good with the audience, and it was just a lot of fun."

The show's opening act will be the Trachtenburg Family Slide Show Players, a group that defies classification. The group's show at the WOW Hall earlier this year sold out. Tickets are available for \$15 at all Safeway TicketsWest locations and \$18 at the door if not sold out. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m.

Andrew Shipley is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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