

WOW Hall to host African rock show Friday night

The Motet and Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra will perform their African-influenced music together

By Natasha Chilingirian
Pulse Reporter

An African rock show will hit the WOW Hall Friday night, with performers planning to bring life-celebrating and environmentally friendly messages along with their musical dance parties.

Colorado-based band The Motet derives their music from West African, Brazilian and Cuban influences. They will be traveling in a bus fueled

CONCERT PREVIEW

exclusively with the biodegradable, nontoxic fuel called "Biodiesel." During the band's "The Biodiesel Tour," they will perform in 15 cities in Colorado, Arizona, California, Oregon and Washington, where they will speak of the advantages of the eco-friendly fuel.

"Biodiesel just makes sense," drummer Dave Watts said. "It's one thing to use the fuel locally, but it's another to take a trip around the nation with it."

Biodiesel is created by removing glycerin from animal fats and vegetables through a chemical process. It is renewable and free from sulfur and aromatics. The fuel is available nationwide at some public pumps, Biodiesel producers and some petroleum distributors.

"It's amazing," Watts said. "You can tell how less toxic the fuel is when you stand behind the vehicle



Courtesy

Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra will bring a rocking dance party to the WOW Hall on Friday for its show with The Motet. Tickets are \$12 before the show and \$15 at the door.

and the exhaust comes out."

The band members — Watts, percussionist Scott Messersmith, keyboardist Greg Raymond, bassist Garrett Sayers and guitarist Mark Donovan — plan to provide a rocking drum-fest for the audience after discussing

their earth-conscious concerns.

"They are percussion-driven, with some chanty lyrics," Harmonized Records and Home Grown Music Network publicist Chris Johnston said.

The Motet has been performing across the United States since 1998. The band has released three albums: "Breathe," "Play" and "Live."

"Our favorite areas to perform are the Northwest and the Southeast," Watts said. "There is a similar vibe there to Colorado. People are open to expressing themselves."

Watts said the group hopes to play in Europe, Japan and Australia.

"We love seeing the world, and we'd like to combine that with playing music," he said.

WOW Hall publicist Bob Fennessy said The Motet always triggers an energetic dance party in the audience.

"They are a jam-rocked band based on Afro-Cuban percussion," he said. "They appeal to the same fans of the Grateful Dead and Phish."

The Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra will join The Motet on stage. The 14-piece band combine jazz, funk, horns

and bass with traditional African beats, add lyrics in English, Spanish and Yoruba that speak of various life-affirming themes.

The group began in 1997 in New York City and has since toured Europe, Canada and the United States. They have released two albums: "Liberation Afrobeat Vol. I" and "Talkatiff," their latest release. The band initiated the first of 70 "AFRICALIA!" parties, a string of African music celebrations in New York City. They also contributed to a compilation album which raised money to combat the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

University drumming instructor Brian West said traditional African music is hard to spot nowadays because the original rhythms are being turned into contemporary songs. Bands such as the Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra and The Motet are breaking African traditions, but at the same time drawing big audiences by mixing original beats with American rock.

"For the last 40 years in Africa people have been making 'high life' music, which modernized traditional

African music and made it more club-worthy," West said. "At first, it produced a controversial reaction, just as the twist dance did in America when people were putting a superficial edge on an old style of dancing. But African rock bands are attracting audiences because the rock sound gives people something to relate to."

The WOW Hall also supports African culture through community events. African dance and drumming classes, sponsored by the Eugene West African Dance and Drum Collective are taught at WOW Hall on Sunday mornings and Monday and Wednesday evenings.

"Many Eugene community members are interested in Africa and would like to go there," Fennessy said. "There is a strong West African and Zimbabwe-Eugene connection."

The Motet and the Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra will perform Nov. 21 at 8:30 p.m. WOW Hall is located at 291 W. 8th St. Tickets are available at the UO Ticket Office in the EMU for \$12 and at the door for \$15.

Contact the Pulse reporter at natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com.



Courtesy

The Motet is touting the values of Biodiesel, an eco-friendly fuel, during its 15-city tour.

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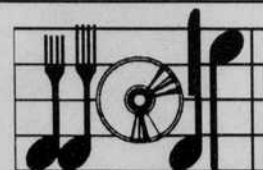
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