

# The Maybe Happening to hold CD release party

The Portland-based duo use poetry, guitars and violins to flesh out their sound

By Ryan Nyburg  
Senior Pulse Reporter

Nathan Langston and Jonathan Andersen, the Portland duo that comprises The Maybe Happening, have been playing together for a long time.

"We started off playing video games," Langston said. "Now we play in a band."

The two have been close since Langston was 2 and Andersen was 3, and they eventually decided to form a band. But this is not to say they were completely alike.

"I was classically trained," Langston said. "I was playing Bach, Rachmaninoff, etc. Jon, on the other hand, took a few lessons, but mostly was playing the Pixies and Nirvana."

Combining their disparate musical influences, along with Langston's interest in poetry, The Maybe Happening do not resemble many other bands. Mixing spoken word poetry with Andersen's distorted guitar and Langston's violin,

the band creates a sound that Andersen describes as "Mozart meets Metallica."

"Many of our songs are like classical compositions," Andersen said. "Some of them are just standard verse/chorus/verse, but many of them are classical in the way they move through many different areas."

With a new self-titled album, the band is ready to expand beyond the few Eugene and Portland clubs where they have been able to score gigs. Filling out their sound on the album with trumpets, drums and cellos, they recorded many songs that Langston and Andersen had been playing for a while, as well as a few new tunes. In regards to the songwriting, the band uses a simple and collaborative process.

"One of us will come up with a riff or an idea and we'll play around with it until we come up with something," said Andersen.

The newly recorded work might mean the band could find a larger audience. That audience will be able to watch the band Saturday night at Foolscape Books, where the Happening will be having their CD release party. But publicity isn't all the band has in

mind for the event.

"It's going to be a multimedia event," Foolscape owner Marietta Bonaventure said. "There will be other bands from Portland, like Broken Prophylaxis and the Binary Dolls. There will be local poets, including Jerry Wagner and Doug Jerome, some interactive art and maybe film."

The show is the latest in a series of "experiment shows" that Langston has put on at the bookstore.

"The idea is to get in as many forms of expression as possible," Langston said. "We try to get everything that we can involved in it. We're even getting a stand-up comic."

Langston has a long history with Foolscape. While an English major at the University last year, he won the Foolscape-hosted Eugene Poetry Slam and was a member of the Eugene Slam team. But after graduating, Langston decided to move to Portland.

"I think I did all I could do in Eugene," Langston said. "Anyway, my girlfriend lives here."

After their new album is released to the public, the Happening aren't exactly



Courtesy

Portland's The Maybe Happening will hold a CD release party at Foolscape Books on Saturday.

sure what their next move will be.

"Sound wise, I think we might become more extreme in the way of dynamics, switching from really soft to really loud," Andersen said. "Beyond that I really don't know where we'll go."

For the moment, the band is simply looking forward to the upcoming show.

"It's going to be great," Langston

said. "This party is going to be of comic book proportions."

Foolscape Books is located at 780 Blair Blvd. The Maybe Happening CD release party begins at 9 p.m., with tickets available for \$5 at the door. The Happening's new CD will be on sale for \$8.

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# Band uses odd noises to create beauty

The Austin, Texas-based band Explosions in the Sky has a stunningly unique, if slightly pretentious, sound

By Helen Schumacher  
Pulse Columnist

I hate the sounds of modern living. Our ears are constantly subjected to the buzz of technology — computers, refrigerators, heaters, fans, cars, leaf blowers and lawn mowers — that is developed to make our lives easier. And I suppose they do, but at a cost. Silence is rare, if not non-existent, in a city.

Explosions in the Sky, an Austin,

Texas, quartet, provides a remedy for this 21st-century drone. Their latest album, "The Earth Is Not a Cold

## CD REVIEW

Dead Place," is an affirmation that the Earth is, in fact,

not the decaying sphere of metal and concrete that comes across in the sound of machinery. The album begins with the song "First Breath After Coma." And that's what it sounds like, an aural awakening after years of listening to buzzing motors. Explosions In the Sky transform the noise of daily life into music.

Instead of a leaking faucet, listeners get a steady, dripping guitar note and a bass drum heartbeat. Layer upon layer of instrumentation — guitar, bass, percussion — is added, building texture and creating tension.

In other songs, such as "The Only Moment We Were Alone" and "Six Days at the Bottom of the Ocean," the parts accumulate, becoming more frantic, and then fade, only to return in full force, like a hurricane ripping out street lights and creating waves that erode away the soil. Finally, all traces of civilization collapse into the sea.

The musicians in the band are able to capture the dynamics of the

natural world and transform it into thick and dreamy post-rock like that of bands Mogwai, Godspeed You Black Emperor! or The Dirty Three. With its sweeping, grandiose songs, Explosions in the Sky belong to a pretentious genre of music, but not without reason. It takes patience and endurance from the musician to sustain the energy and emotion for so long. "The Earth Is Not a Cold Dead Place" is only five songs long, but spans just longer than 45 minutes.

Just like the name, Explosions in the Sky is both apocalyptic and stunning.

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## TRIUMPH

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environment," before all merge into a call and response finale that answers

"Needs a little pooping" to lyrics such as "Every actor who tries to sing," and "Shitty movies made from crap TV." Most of the band from O'Brien's TV show provides the music.

Obviously, this album will rub up against the edge of some listener's comfort zones. Laughter often requires a suspension of judgment. Just how much suspension will determine how much enjoyment

laughter is elicited from a given person.

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## BRIEF

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Human Services from the University.

"I thought about going into social work, but the position with Student Life has allowed me to focus on my music and stay in Eugene," Makena said.

Makena took piano lessons for several years.

"The minute I started (lessons) I fell in love with it," she said. "I knew it was a part of me."

Inspired by the likes of Judy Garland and Joni Mitchell as a youth, Makena's own sound has a self-described New Age feel with songs focusing on transformation and finding oneself.

Makena played at the old Eugene City Bistro and local coffeehouses, but she didn't release her first album until May.

With the help of Barbara Higbie, a singer and songwriter who has worked on more than 40 albums, Makena got started on her first release.

"Barbara Higbie is such an inspiration for me," Makena said. "Since May she's been such a great supporter of my music."

With Higbie's help, Makena also produced a six-song blues and jazz album that was released in October, and she said she hopes to release another album later this year.

— Beau Eastes

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|---|---|

Both lectures will be held at 8 p.m. in Room 182, Lillis Hall.

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