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True one-man band Williams blends folk, funk, futurism

The inventive funk-folkster began as the opening act for String Cheese Incident

By **Natasha Chilingirian**
Pulse Reporter

Keller Williams has the tendency of taking off his shoes and laying a rug down on stage for a performance. Usually dressed in rolled-up khakis and a T-shirt, he entices the audience with a musical switchoff among his eight guitars, illuminating the sound that's created with electronic gadgets and machines.

"He has this amazing synergy with the crowd," Williams' publicist Ashley Matthews said. "He makes you feel like you're in his living room."

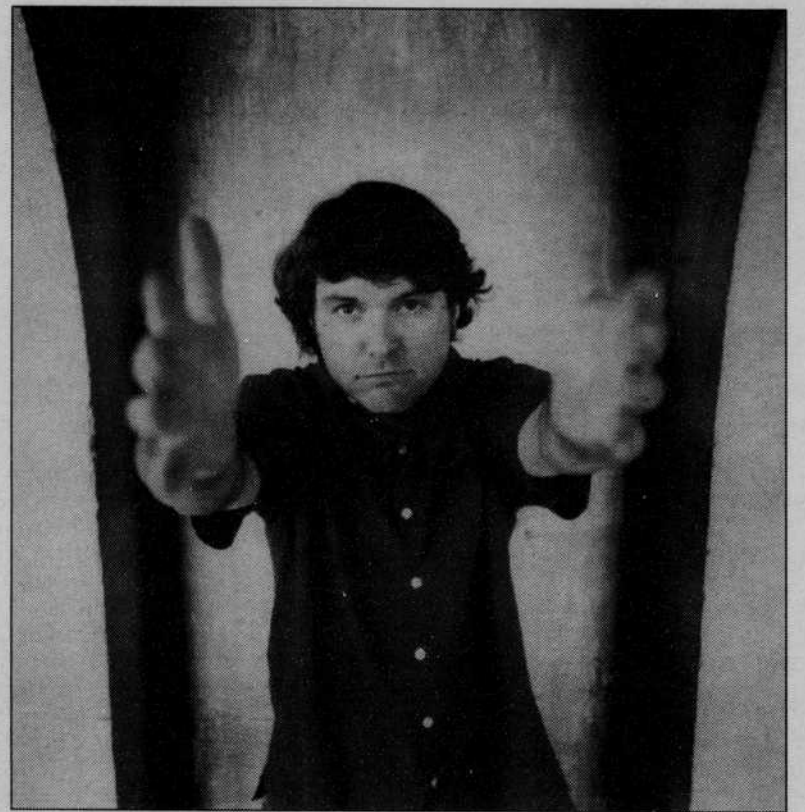
Williams will make his audience feel at home at the McDonald Theatre on March 25. A true one-man band, he uses technology and creativity to produce a big sound, which is a mixture of progressive folk, acoustic funk and futuristic elements.

"He's improvisational in his heart and goes off on these tangents," Matthews said. "He reaches out and makes his music his own."

His sound-electrifying machines, known as processors, allow Williams to repeat his notes from one guitar as he puts it down and exchanges it for another. His wide guitar selection includes a baritone 6-string bass named "Alvarez" and a custom-made 8-string bass, with two bass and six guitar strings, called "Zilla." Backed up by a cast of instruments with their own personalities, Williams is able to pull lots of tricks on stage.

"The looping technology creates the bands behind him," said Carrie Lombardi, the head publicist at Madison House Publicity, whose firm represents Williams. "Sometimes he makes a mouth flugel, which is a noise that comes from his lips that sounds like a trumpet."

Williams' inventiveness most likely came from his years of experience hitting the road and touring alone. Originally from Fredericksburg, Va., he grew from playing in high school bands and working the coffee shop circuit to appearing in national tours and festivals. Since the self-taught musician couldn't support a band,



Courtesy

Singer-songwriter Keller Williams brings folk, acoustic funk, technology and a lively personality to the stage. He plays the McDonald Theatre on March 25.

he learned to experiment and entertain his audience as if he had a group of players behind him. His career took off with help from the band String Cheese Incident, which already had a fan base and connected him with new gigs.

Williams has released eight albums — "Buzz" in 1996, "Spun" in 1998, "Breathe" in 1999, "Loop" in 2000, "Freek" in 2001, "Laugh" in 2002, "Dance" in 2003 and "Home" in 2003. The most recent release represents his light-hearted, carefree attitude toward his lyrics. For example, on the track "Love Handles," he sings about loving a little extra fat around the waistline.

"His song writing is humorous," Madison House Publicity management team member Christine Stauder said. "His lyrics are fun and happy — nothing too dark. He portrays the lighter side of life."

Most of Williams' songs are born on the road. He usually writes and

performs new music while on tour, then puts his creations together into a new album. Lombardi said his songs are a cross between real events in his life and his vivid imagination.

"Something will happen to him when he's on the road, and he'll give it a Keller twist," she said. "It's exactly like in the movie 'Big Fish.'"

Williams' happy-go-lucky personality shows up on stage. Stauder said he often uses wacky facial expressions and dances around stage to give off a funny, good-hearted aura.

"You get the laid-back comic feel from him," she said.

Tickets to Williams' show are available in advance through TicketsWest for \$17 and at the door at 5:30 p.m. for \$20. The doors open at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. The McDonald Theatre is located at 1010 Willamette St.

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McDONALD THEATRE TRUE B MUSIC

Tickets at all **TicketsWest** Outlets or call (800) 992-TIXX. Service charges may apply. All concerts will feature an opening band unless otherwise noted. Times subject to change. Interactive show information available at www.mcdonaldtheatre.com

<p>ARLO GUTHRIE MON MAR 15 7 PM DOORS - All Ages Reserved Seating</p>	<p>HENRY ROLLINS THUR MAR 18 7 PM DOORS - All Ages Reserved Seating</p>
<p>BENEFIT FOR BUCKLEY HOUSE FRI MAR 19 6 PM DOORS - All Ages Limited Seating</p>	<p>KELLER WILLIAMS THUR MAR 25 7 PM DOORS - All Ages Limited Seating</p>
<p>PUNK VOTE! TOUR NOFX ALKALINE TRIO AUTHORITY ZERO JELLO BIAFRA WED MAR 31 7 PM DOORS - All Ages Limited Seating</p>	<p>PINK MARTINI SAT APR 10 7 PM DOORS - All Ages Reserved Seating</p>

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Gibson's 'Passion' falls short by defining divinity as misery

Recently I went to the theater and sacrificed some hard-earned cash to see this movie about Jesus. Maybe you've heard of it?

Like some of you out there, I was, shall we say, skeptical about "The Passion of the Christ." But with the controversy swirling, I had to see what the big deal was. A friend of mine recently told me that he saw people passing out in the theater, a paramedic unit standing by in the lobby and large men sobbing like children.

I knew then a spectacle was at hand. This was going to be rich. I got my tickets and watched the movie. Waiting. Waiting for someone to pass out, vomit or run screaming from their seat. Anything.

Two hours later, I was bored, and not one person passed out or puked

— nothing. This movie wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

But people were crying, wiping their eyes, lost in a pain that didn't seem to reach me. Is this the epitome of the divine experience? Why are we drawn to agony and misery? Is this the culmination of mankind?



Carl Sundberg

Reasoning with madness

As I got to my car, I saw one of those bumper stickers that read: "What would Jesus do?" I thought about the phrase for a moment and really let it sink in. And I realized whatever it was Jesus did, I'm not going to do. I don't want to be beat like that, and certainly that crucifixion

deal has got to be one of the worst ways a person can go.

I felt hollow after I left the film. I needed something rejuvenating. I wasn't filled with love, hate, sadness or any real human emotion at all as I drove home. Funny, after watching the not-as-savage-as-everyone-mentions flick of the last 12 hours of Christ, I felt nothing. Right afterward, I checked my bank account, and with the thick checks I make writing these columns, I had stacks of the mean green. I decided to buy some music.

I went into a music store and began shuffling through the racks. There was loud banger music playing in the store, and a girl with a punk rock shirt helped me find some music I was looking for.

When I got the music I wanted and was checking out, I saw soundtracks for "The Passion of the Christ" and I asked her if people were buying these. "No, not really." "Have you seen the movie?" I asked. "No, I don't believe in God."

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