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## Local band's ripe sound defies 'metal' stereotypes

*In the Name of God mixes a classical edge with fast-paced brutality*

BY RYAN MURPHEY  
PULSE REPORTER

The crowd gathers at the front of the stage as Russ Mortenson, vocalist and bassist for the Eugene metal band In the Name of God, steps up to the microphone to timidly mutter a greeting to the audience.

After his barely audible address, Mortenson undergoes a drastic transformation from the man who just seconds before appeared shy and uncomfortable to a belligerent madman screaming ferociously into the microphone. At first the sound is overwhelming, but as you get a chance to let the music sink in, you start to pick up on the classical inspiration behind the leads of guitarists Geoff Miller and A.J. Chordas.

You feel the drumming of Wes "Bean" Robertson pounding in your chest with mechanical precision, and you realize that this is not ugly, not beautiful, not noisy, not coherent. It is not any one of these things; it is all of them.

Metal is often written off as "noise" or even "meathead music," but just try to find a meathead that could write a three-part guitar lead or arrange a song like In the Name of God's, "Cancer." For many, metal is as creative and intelligent as any music out there, and the people who make it take their work very seriously. In the Name of God is one such band.

Tired of the increasingly homogenized metal scene in America, ITNOG's founders Miller and Ferguson got together early in 2003 to form a band that was more than just power chords and bad vocals. Ferguson is a second-year music student majoring in classical composition with about 14 years of informal experience



COURTESY

In the Name of God plays dark and apocalyptic music at Eugene venue WOW Hall

on the guitar. Miller, who was a drummer before ITNOG, took notes from Ferguson and quickly caught up enough to co-write music and play on stage. Their song-writing blends elements of classical composition with the brutality, speed and neo-classical elements of bands like Slayer, At The Gates and Bach.

They began playing with Troy Seavers, a drummer who currently plays for the band Satin Fury, until Seavers announced that he was more interested in playing music that was a combination of Mr. Bungle and The Bloodhound Gang. After parting ways with Seavers, Ferguson and Miller began to look for a new drummer and hold auditions for a bassist. They found out that another local metal band, Off With Their Heads, had recently broken up and they started calling the former bassist, Mortenson, who turned out to be a perfect fit. After Mortenson became involved in the band, the highly coveted Wes "Bean" Robertson, also from Off With Their Heads, agreed to join.

"It's like when stupid Christians say God never shuts a door without opening a window, except we don't really believe in God," Miller said.

### IN THE NAME OF GOD

When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Who: Mani-Fest 2004

Where: WOW Hall

Price: \$5

The band takes their name from a song by their favorite band, Slayer, but Miller said they also chose the name for the irony associated with it, specifically the atrocities that have been carried out "in the name of God" throughout history. He also likes the fact that one of the first questions people ask them when they hear the name is if they are a Christian band. If the lyrics were easier to understand, inquirers would probably understand why that question makes the band chuckle.

"My lyrics are very dark and apocalyptic," Mortenson said. "My brain always comes up with crazy scenarios of stuff like zombies rising from graves and devouring humanity one bite at a time. Kinda like how the world would be if I was in charge."

For now, the farthest away from Eugene that ITNOG has performed is Portland, but it seems to be the unanimous commitment of the band to become career musicians. By next summer, the band hopes to have completed a West Coast tour and all of them would like to be touring consistently in the next five years.

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## Celebrities encourage voter registration, endorse candidates

*Students say celebrity opinions shouldn't sway the opinions of other voters in the presidential elections*

BY AMY LICHTY  
PULSE REPORTER

Celebrity endorsements are nothing new. Catherine Zeta-Jones invites us to "come to T-Mobile." Sarah Jessica Parker reveals the secret to her gorgeous blonde hair: Garnier. Jessica Simpson uses her ditziness to sell buffalo wing pizza for Pizza Hut, and Justin Timberlake's "I'm lovin' it" gives people cravings for chicken nuggets and french fries.

It's not a coincidence that famous stars sell products; advertisers learned long ago that merchandise sells better if someone we recognize and perhaps even admire tells us how great the product is. But how far can that sort of influence go? Could a famous celebrity sway votes on an issue as important as the presidency?

With stars such as Brad Pitt, Gwyneth Paltrow, Robert DeNiro and Jack Black outspokenly giving support to presidential hopeful John Kerry, it seems that Kerry would win this election if the endorsements were any indication. Not that George W. Bush doesn't have his share of celebrity fans, including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Simpson, Mel Gibson, Ben Stein

and the Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady. But does the star power of Hollywood's elite convert into votes?

"It's not clear that celebrity endorsements will help a candidate or not," political science Professor Joseph Lowndes said. "Although I'm sure it doesn't hurt. They can help raise money for their candidate, but I don't think voters connect their favorite actors or musicians to how they will stand on the issues."

Sophomore pre-journalism major Brittney Lively agreed.

"I think the issues are more important than what a celebrity thinks. Voters should vote for what they believe in instead of following what others are doing, although some do (follow)."

And although she is a registered Republican, Lively admits she does not yet know who she will vote for this November.

"Obviously, my opinion is my opinion, and I'm not going to change it, even if celebrities tell me to," junior business major Marie Elbert said. "It really shouldn't influence anybody's vote, but it's cool to think that Brad Pitt is voting for the same person I am."

"Celebrity endorsements help be-

cause a lot of people are celebrity-obsessed," said journalism major Linda Gampert, who, like Elbert, is a strong Kerry supporter. "It should definitely help the candidate, but it shouldn't change people's opinions."

"It can't hurt," College Democrats member Chris Halverson said. "Every vote counts, and celebrities getting out there keeps the issue alive."

Other celebrities are just using their star power to get people to the voting booths. Celebrities such as P. Diddy, Jake and Maggie Gyllenhaal, Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Christina Aguilera appeared on "Oprah" in September to urge people to register to vote.

The Gyllenhaals went around the campus of UCLA and registered hundreds of people to vote. Diaz and Aguilera did the same in other places and Barrymore made a documentary to find out why people weren't getting out to vote. P. Diddy attended both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions and has even made voting a fashion statement by appearing at events sporting a "Vote or Die" T-shirt. Other designers such as DKNY are following suit and making "Rock the Vote" shirts to remind everyone that voting is important.

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