

E & A: Improvisation central to performance

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person's comments and translating them into battle-style rap.

Larsen's longtime friend and collaborator, Abilities, forms the DJ half of Eyedea & Abilities. Improvisation is a fundamental element of their performances, and Abilities' frantic beats meld seamlessly with Eyedea's syllabic rampages, chasing each other around the stage and playing off of each other in a

flawless call-and-response style that makes every show worth seeing.

According to Abe Nielson, program director for the WOW Hall, during the duo's last Eugene concert the hall was only about 80 people short of maximum capacity. Nielson said that it wouldn't surprise him if their upcoming show sold out.

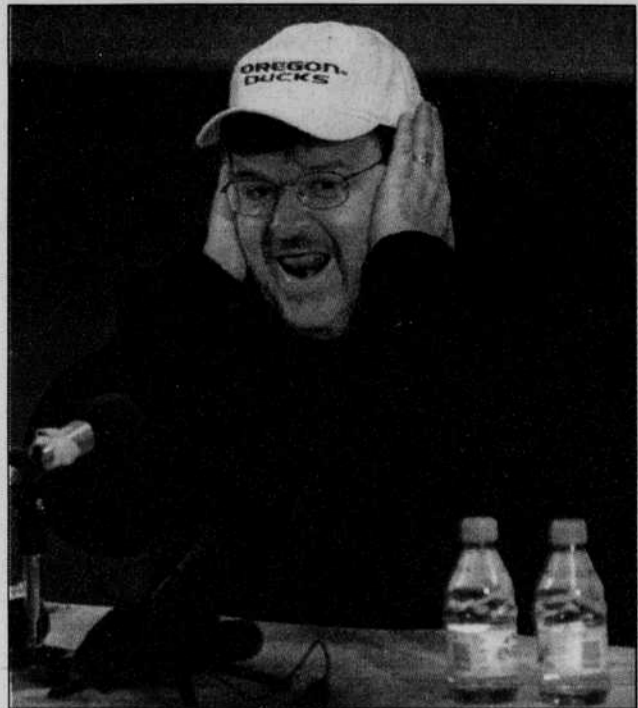
"I love Eugene," said Larsen, who is excited to return. "Kids there are really into what we are trying to do."

Eyedea & Abilities' last full-length

album, "E&A," is currently available through Epitaph Records, a smaller label that is currently the home of artists such as Converge, Sage Francis, Nick Cave and Tom Waits.

Eyedea & Abilities will be performing tonight at the WOW Hall with Illogic & DJ Przm, Los Nativos and The Ramsey Bros. featuring Ms. Su'ad. Doors open at 8 p.m. and the show starts at 8:30 p.m.

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When asked what his plans would be if President Bush were to win the election, Director Michael Moore reacts during a pre-event press conference Monday afternoon at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

ERIK R. BISHOP PHOTOGRAPHER

Moore: Cheap shots override good points, critics say

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listen to Moore field questions from the cream of the Eugene press corps. Most of them were simple prompts for pre-scripted answers ("What are your plans for election day?") with a few attempts to get Moore to say something outrageous. Moore looked pretty much like he does on movies and television: ruffled, poorly shaven and with a look on his face that says, "I just woke up, give me an update on reality."

After the conference, we all rushed into the main hall for the big event. Like most political rallies these days, the atmosphere was somewhat rock-concert. Moore came onto the stage to heavy applause (according to a head count, there were no Republicans inside the event center, unless you count Billionaires for Bush). His voice sounded hoarse from the tour; I must admit a little respect for the guy considering he's not getting paid for this.

Right off the bat, Moore started hitting Bush Jr., mocking his debate performance, his foreign policy and the way he talks. Moore depends too much on cheap shots for his "schtick" to work, picks easy targets and mocks more than he dissects. In the current election lingo, he was "energizing the base," or in other words, "preaching to the choir."

It is easy to see Moore's appeal. He's charismatic, self-deprecating and doesn't take himself too seriously. Or at least he didn't used to take himself so seriously. These days he's full of righteous indignation over the war in Iraq and the Bush presidency. He looks over things, makes slip-ups for the sake of an argument, paints black and white pictures of the world and engages in general

rabble-rousing. In his vision, the Republicans are the rich and powerful minority that are ruling over the good and generous poor majority. But if you took a poll of the working class in this country, what would the demographic look like? Not as liberal as Moore seems to believe.

For all of this, he does make good points.

"The only time I've seen this guy (John Ashcroft) stand up for the Constitution is when he ordered the FBI to stop searching gun files. And to this day the FBI has not been allowed to find out if any of the 19 hijackers had purchased any weapons," he said.

This balance between the good points and the distortions has been what Moore's more sympathetic critics have been harping on. Every other mild-mannered centrist seems to say, "Having so many factual errors in his movies only makes it harder to believe him when he's right." His less sympathetic critics tend to focus on other aspects of Moore's personality. Some critics have taken a more sophisticated approach, calling his films propaganda and saying that nearly everything he says is an outright lie.

Of course his films are propaganda, but by definition, so is any form of media that expresses a viewpoint and attempts to influence public opinion. But Moore didn't talk about his critics much, other than a few jabs at Bill O'Reilly (an excellent propagandist in his own right). He mostly spoke about the importance of voting and even had a few good, "We will fight them on the beaches" moments. But for the most part, it was all just preaching to the choir.

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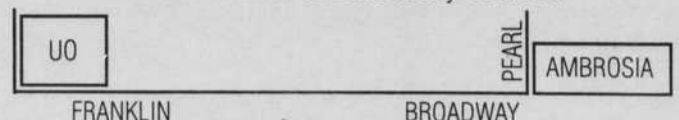
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