Pulse

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■ **In my opinion**

RYAN NYBURG
BUDGET RACK

New music can live up to nostalgic expectations

As I've stated before, people often have this misperception about me that I don't like popular stuff. There is a common view of music critics that they find the most obscure and atrocious sounding music and wax poetic about its virtues ad nausea until no one can stand to be around us. While I do listen to some pretty grating stuff, I balance it out with a respect for songcraft and melody. While it's not always pop music (in the sense that most of it isn't all that popular), it goddamned well should be.

One of my current favorites is the Shins and their two albums, "Oh, Inverted World" and "Chutes Too Narrow." These guys create brilliant pop rock and the only reason they aren't considered a contender for the next Beatles is that that the Beatles have been so mythologized and so fanatically overrated that no one will ever be able to compete with the image. The Shins write such wonderful melodies that I find myself singing along to songs I don't even know the words to, but no one outside of college radio DJs (and Zach Braff in his film soundtracks, God bless him) will ever play them.

Now of course I'm going to get a bunch of people bitching at me for dissing on the Beatles. Let me clear it up and say that I love them, more so every year, and think they are one of the greatest bands to ever record. But let's not fly off the handle and just leave it at that. Nothing pisses me off more as a music critic than the easy reading of musical history that lavishes praise on everything that came out of the 1960s and laments the following four decades. Bob Dylan farts into a mic and it's a classic, but no one has ever heard of the Decemberists. Can't my musical era be as great as a previous one, or do I have to wait for the last of the boomers to die off before we can have a serious discussion about this?

Nostalgia is a disease in culture. Things were always better than they are now, apparently, though that makes no logical sense. I take a different view. I believe that things, when you look at the larger picture, tend to stay about the same. There was some great music then, and there was a lot of shit. People just tend to forget the shit.

One tactic of some older critics to promote the nostalgic view is to claim that all of the good musicians today took all of their best ideas from the great artists of the past. "The White Stripes just redo garage rock and Delta blues," or "Interpol is just a reworked Joy Division." So on and so forth, as if being influenced by the music of the past were either a crime or a new development. Name a group from the 1960s or early 1970s that wasn't influenced by blues, R&B, jazz, folk or classical music. Popular music is all about recycling and it always has been. Musicians take what they're familiar with and rework it to fit their own personal vision. The best of them create new variations that go on to influence the next generation.

So let's just say that the Shins can be as good as the Beatles, the Mars Volta is as good as King Crimson, Queens of the Stone Age have moments that rival Black Sabbath, Wilco makes music comparable to Pink Floyd and Fountains of Wayne could be as good as the Kinks at their best, if that was the route they wanted to take. Let them have their moment in the sun and don't go telling me they don't add up when compared to some fantasy of the past that our culture has created for itself. I prefer to deal with realities, thank you very much.

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MATT SCHROTER | FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

A collage made by local artist Kimberly Gladen titled "Bush's Peace of Republican Freedom" is on display at The New Zone art gallery in downtown Eugene.

Streets *of* Splendor

The First Friday Artwalk is a free monthly tour of art galleries and other attractions in downtown Eugene

BY NICHOLAS WILBUR
NEWS REPORTER

On the first Friday of each month, Lane Arts Council provides a free walking tour of art galleries and attractions in downtown Eugene. The August First Friday ArtWalk, hosted by cultural services director at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts Robb Hankins, began at 5:30 p.m. in Jacobs Gallery in the lower level of the Hult Center.

About 125 people took advantage of the free service, crowding into local galleries to hear local artists and craft makers talk about their creations, all the while enjoying complimentary food and drinks.

Robb Hankins, who hosted his second tour in the last two years, said he is amazed that sometimes as many as 300 people follow him around town on the ArtWalk.

"I think people really get excited to hear artists talk about their work," he said in response to the often overwhelming crowds.

Artists Miriam Kley and David Reager presented "Illusion & Rhythm," at Jacobs Gallery, a display of two very different styles made with the same clay-like materials.

Kley said she was inspired to construct her works by the view from her kitchen window. Her first piece is a drawing of a kitchen sink, surrounding counter and window. The window is molded with clay, making the landscape outside, Kley's garden, have a more "realistic feel," she said.

"I wanted the outside to look more real than the inside, so I just drew the inside and molded the outside landscape," Kley said. "There's always a sort of play between drawing, which is the illusion, and molding,which is rhythm."

From Jacobs Gallery the crowd walked across the street to White Lotus Gallery on Seventh Avenue and Willamette Street where owner Dick Easley presented "Multiple Palettes/Varied Vision," a display of 30 jewelers from around the country whose work all focused on color.

"These artists are highly regarded in jewelry and in the crafts world," Easley said.

Marcia Mcdonald, a local artist who helped organize the show, invited her fellow jewelry makers from all over the United States.

"Because color is important to the work I do, I decided, 'Let's do a show about color!' Things are so much more alive with color, as opposed to just silver and gold," she said.

The next stop was Tibet's Fine Design on Broadway, which opened less than six months ago and displays and sells authentic Tibetan rugs.

Tsetath Namgyal, the son of the owner, explained the process of creating the rugs all the way from the sheep-shearing in Tibet.

"The rugs are all made in Nepal, but all of the wool is from Tibet. We use almost all natural oil dyes and all the rugs are hand cut and 100 percent handmade," Namgyal said. "These rugs would last you a lifetime."

Namgyal assured the crowd that children are not exploited in the production of these rugs.

"There is no child labor, you must be 18 ears of age or older," Namgyal told the crowd, "and by selling these rugs, we help Napalese and Tibetans with their livelihood."

The store offers traditional and contemporary styles of rugs in an assortment of colors and shades, shapes, sizes and various thread counts.

The next stop was Ninth Avenue and Oak Street, where The New Zone gallery presented its New Member Show. New Zone provides support for local artists, something they have been recognized for by the City of Eugene and the Lane Regional Arts Council since 1983.

One Eugene artist, Kimberly Gladen had a collage of newspaper clippings, pictures and plastic army soldiers on a piece she titled "Bush's Peace of Republican Freedom," which is selling for $95.

Gladen said she was inspired to create the political piece because it depicts what is happening around her in the world right now.

"It's some of what I'm seeing, the trends and patterns on how we're being programmed in this world," Gladen said.

The last stop of the First Friday ArtWalk was DIVA, Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts, at the corner of Olive Street and Broadway. This seven-gallery facility holds art classes and events, showcases visual art displays and shows films.

"The DIVA offers a wide array of classes and we're currently having a membership drive because we want to support local artists and (the) community. We have 250 and our goal is 600," DIVA director Mary Runuh.

Hult Center intern and University student Elizabeth Shawan said the First Friday ArtWalk turnout was pretty good, although a little less than the July tour.

"It's encouraging because I see a diverse crowd in terms of age," she said. "So you can meet a lot of people in your community, not just the artists."

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EUGENE ART GALLERIES

The Jacobs Gallery
One Eugene Center
Located in the lower level of the Hult Center for the Performing Arts.
Summer hours:
Tuesday - Friday, noon - 5 p.m.
Saturday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
The Jacobs Gallery is also open during all Hult Center performances.
682.5087
24-hour Event information: 682.5746

White Lotus Gallery
767 Willamette St.
345-3276
www.wlotus.com
E-mail lin@wlotus.com

Tibet's Fine Design
80 E. Broadway
984-2387

New Zone
975 Oak Alley
344-5912

DIVA
110 W. Broadway
344-3482

EVENTS MOVIES BOOKS MUSIC

s m t w th f s

Thursday
Surfonics
Blue Luna Club
10 p.m., Free
Surf music

Friday
JC Rico
and Zulu Dragon
Luna
8:30 p.m., $6
Chicago-style
rockin' blues

Saturday
Loquat, Invisible
Luckey's
9 p.m., $2-$5
Indie rock

Sunday
Drums for Peace
Federal Building
2 - 4 p.m., Free
Open drum circle

TOP 5 MOVIES

1: "The Dukes of Hazzard"
2: "Wedding Crashers"
3: "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"
4: "Sky High"
5: "Must Love Dogs"

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLERS

1: James Patterson, Andrew Gross, "The Lifeguard"
2: Terry McMillian, "The Interruption of Everything"
3: Elizabeth Kostova, "The Historian"
4: John Irving, "Until I Find You"
5: Dan Brown, "The Da Vinci Code"

BILLBOARD TOP 5

1: Various Artists, "Now 19"
2: Young Jeezy, "Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 101"
3: Mariah Carey, "The Emancipation of Mimi"
4: Dane Cook, "Retaliation"
5: Jason Mraz, "Mr. A-Z"