

Peachy keen

It's Old Guard meets New Guard as Elton John and Rufus Wainwright hit their stride together

Thank goodness for Rufus Wainwright. Not because his music is lovely, but because the Walkman blaring his new album warmed my ears as the cigarette warmed my fingertips on a bitterly cold Thursday-morning walk home from an all-nighter at the office. All that's missing is the chocolate milk.

Rufus' lush, baroque songs give me peace as I stroll through the rapidly changing but appropriately named SEED neighborhood. This really is a fantastic time to be queer.

Want Two, the sequel to 2003's groundbreaking *Want One*, coincides with the 43rd release from Elton John, *Peachtree Road*, his introspective follow-up to 2001's acclaimed *Songs from the West Coast*. It's so inspiring to see these two artists working at the top of their games.

It's also inspiring to rediscover Elton, a 57-year-old legend who hasn't put out anything meaningful since 1983's "I Guess That's Why They Call It Blues." I pretty much lost interest



around the time he started re-releasing "Candle in the Wind"—first as a 1987 live version and then 10 years later as a dreadful tribute to Princess Diana. (Speaking of which, is anyone else disturbed by growing resemblance between Prince Harry and Di lover James Hewitt? Just asking.)

Anyway, I'm noticing a number of similarities between Rufus and Elton's new albums—in fact, one of the tracks on *Want Two* is titled "Peach Trees." Hmm, are these secretly companion pieces? Let's explore the evidence:

They're both openly gay. Elton keeps it pretty subtle, especially considering his longtime lyricist, Bernie Taupin, is straight. Meanwhile, Rufus holds nothing back on "Gay Messiah": "No it will not be me/Rufus the baptist I be/No I won't be the one/Baptized in cum."

They're both influential. Critics constantly compare Scissor Sisters' "Take Your Mama" to early Elton, while two Rufus songs ("Vibrate" and "Greek Song") are covered on the latest release from, oddly enough, Manhattan Transfer.

They've both had brushes with death. Elton wrote "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" about his 1968 suicide attempt—a cry for help because he was about to marry a woman who didn't even like his music. Rufus came out as a recovering crystal meth addict last year.

They're both dabbling in acting. Rufus appears in Marty Scorsese's upcoming Howard Hughes biopic, *The Aviator* (a good excuse to check out the Spruce Goose parked in McMinnville, by the way), and Elton is developing an ABC sitcom.

They're both unabashedly uncensored. Elton recently stuck his foot in his mouth by knocking on Madonna's perceived lip-synching during her Reinvention Tour. (Hey, buddy, I shelled out 315 clams to see her perform in the Bay Area the weekend Reagan kicked the bucket. Do not mess with Madge.) As for Rufus, he wears his politics on his sleeve in



Jim's Closet
by Jim Radosta

THE TOP SHELF

Q: Name three gender-bending Beatles tunes.

A: "Get Back" ("Sweet Loretta Martin thought she was a woman/But she was another man"), "Polythene Pam" ("She's so good-looking but she looks like a man/Well you should see her in drag dressed in her polythene bag") and "I Am the Walrus" ("Boy, you been a naughty girl you let your knickers down").

We also would've accepted "Lovely Rita" ("The bag across her shoulder/Made her look a little like a military man"), which will be performed along with the entire *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album by Sneakin' Out and the Billy Shears Orchestra on Dec. 3 in Portland and Dec. 4 in McMinnville. (See Page 30 for details.)

The three bears perform covers of classic rock tunes (mixed in with the occasional Strauss) every Sunday at the Dirty Duck. I can't wait to hear how they reinterpret The Beatles' 1967 masterpiece; their Nov. 21 gig included clever renditions of "Penny Lane," "Eleanor Rigby" and "Norwegian Wood." (I always thought that last one would be a great title for a Scandinavian porno.)

Dig, if you will, the picture: Within 15 minutes, a performer transforms right before our eyes from a diaper-clad, Gollum-esque baby into a dude singing DeBarge while plopped on the shitter into a fast-talking music show host dropping references to Mark Goodson.

Meet **Andrew Ox**, one of the many talented members of *House of Cunt*, which just wrapped up a three-week run at Nocturnal overseen by gay director **Howie Bagdadonutz**. For those who couldn't make it, you can get a taste of Cunt when Ox's ex, **Amby Martin**, performs her wild one-woman show Dec. 7 and 14 at the fabulous gay-owned Wild Abandon. (See Page 30 for details.) The pair serve yummy brunch there every weekend, FYI.

"I am both, and I am neither."
—A phrase uttered repeatedly by the fearless gender-variant youth who spilled their guts Nov. 21 at *Language of Paradox*, the highlight of 2 *Gyrlz Performative Arts*' monthlong *Enteractive Language Festival*. If you missed out this year, don't make the same mistake in 2005.

"Waiting for a Dream": "There's a fire in the priory/And an ogre in the oval office/Once again we all will be so broken/Now can I finally sleep again?"

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