

# Can't Stop the Music

You're never too old to learn

Last August, I had a midlife crisis. "Don't be silly," my partner Marc said. "You're too old." I responded in the time-honored way: I bought a convertible. It's not very practical for Oregon, but no one can be in a bad mood in a convertible.

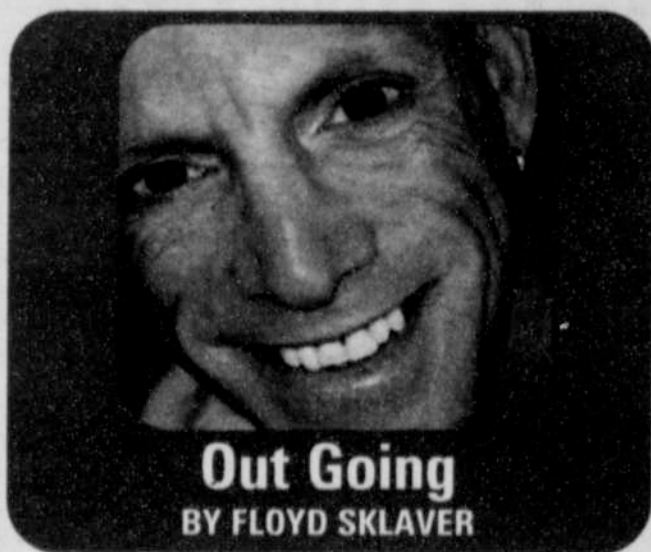
As I toiled around town, cranking the tunes in my new Mini Cooper, I noticed how often people talk to me when I've got the top down. One afternoon, with Aretha Franklin's "Freeway of Love" blaring from the Bose, a young woman waiting at a bus stop exclaimed, "My mother loves that song." And that's when it hit me. Not only was I middle-aged, my musical tastes stopped developing in 1986.

So, I embarked on the Floyd Music Project, asking everyone I met to name their favorite artist and album. The music didn't need to be current; it just needed to be new to me. As it turned out, just about everything post-disco qualified.

So, at James Surgeon and Bill Tolbert's swellegant garden party, Alex Godinez proudly announced that Duran Duran's second album, *Rio*, helped him lose eight pounds in six weeks. Eduardo Hernandez and Nelson Sanjuan listen to Mika, a Lebanese pop singer with a vocal range of five octaves who, according to Nelson (and the critics), "sounds just like Freddie Mercury." In March, the sexually ambiguous Mika, who would be in bold if he stopped being so coy about his preference, reported receiving death threats from fans because he won't admit he's gay.

Stephen Baugh showed off his pearly teeth ("Monster frost is my signature color," he says) and told me he loves José González's debut album, *Vener*. "It's gorgeous," he enthused. "His voice is high and clear, simple and authentic." Robert Witt was also there, although we didn't talk about music. "Wait 'til I've had a few drinks, and then I'll tell you my coming-out story," he promised. Next time, Robert. Unfortunately, I couldn't wait because Matt Neupert's 24th birthday celebration was about to begin.

In Karl Rohde's stylish loft, a small group of close friends gathered to toast Matty before getting toasted at the bars. The birthday boy admitted Sheryl Crow's self-titled album is his favorite because "she does both fun and thoughtful, reflective songs." Karl, who has just been hired as a lobbyist by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, insisted I hear alt-country group Old 97's *Satellite Rides*, which reminded me of Fountains of Wayne, a power pop group introduced to me by Marc Kochanski. Matt Worlock listened to



**Out Going**  
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

Björk's *Greatest Hits* as he traveled through Europe on a Eurail pass. And, speaking of travel, Ron Pitt plans to bring British soul and jazz singer Amy Winehouse on his iPod when he heads to Bali with a group from Portland that includes Jerome Guillen, Mark Dowers and tour organizer Chee Choy.

My quest continued the next day at Our House of Portland's anniversary celebration, where Christian Messner, whose tastes range from Nelly Furtado to Annie Lennox, confided: "When I was younger, I got caught up in the beat. Now that I'm older, I can hear the lyrics." Nathan Buck likes alternative female singer/songwriters. Tori Amos is his current favorite because "she combines voice and piano with great political messages."

When Greg Smoots isn't teaching yoga, he listens to classical or Celtic music. For the past 10 years, he's been learning to play Scottish fiddle. Bill Space listens to opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro* is his current favorite) because he loves the "outsized emotions, big voices and total lack of subtlety." His partner of 17 years, Allen Brady, who works at Our House, loves Scissor Sisters' self-titled first album, as do I, thanks to *Just Out's* Jaymee Cuti, who introduced me to the indie band. (Incidentally, Scissor Sisters were named after the lesbian sex position that's also called touching tacos.)

Speaking of indie bands, both A Fine Frenzy and Sean Lennon opened for Rufus Wainwright recently in Portland, which meant the main event wouldn't start until almost 11 p.m. I wanted to go, but who can stay up that late on a weeknight? You've got to be younger than middle-aged to be that *Out Going*. **10**

FLOYD SKLAVER wants to know about your event. E-mail him at [floydsklaver@comcast.net](mailto:floydsklaver@comcast.net).



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