

From drama class at Molalla High to a punk rock band on the rise



By Erik Andersen
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The world of punk has always fascinated me. Highly energetic groups with a relentless "who cares" mentality. In a way, I think we all acted like this, at least when there would be an unfamiliar sense of excitement every day. I'm pleased to unveil one such rendition of the punk world in My Robotic Mother, a newly young band with still new ways to go in reaching out but steadily moving on their path. The determination camaraderie of this band is shared by very few. The group is made up of Trevor Stewart on the drums, Tyler Gentry as lead vocalist and guitarist and Cody Ward on guitar and backup vocals. The three of them met up in middle school when they were in the same class. "We all met by doing school projects from middle school all the way through high school," stated Gentry in an e-mail. "We loved playing an instrument and figured we should form a band. Originally we were going to try to be a three-piece metal band, but that did not turn out so well. So we learned 'Dammit' by Blink-182 and played at the school talent show and then a few months later we had three songs written, and we just kept listening to this group, it was clear that such bands as Blink

182 and A Day To Remember play a role in where they gather the sound of their music.

I am starting to notice a lot of newer bands and some older ones beginning to mix genres of music to create a different, never-heard-before tone. Such examples include Cee Lo with his rock, hip-hop, rap, pop and R&B mixes and even Snoop Dogg and Willie Nelson getting together. It would appear that My Robotic Mother is no different.

"Mostly I listen to metal and punk rock. I feel that these two genres are best when combined into one, which is what I strive for while writing music," said Gentry.

According to Ward, the band records all their stuff at the Goat-Shed Recording Studio in Mulino, Ore. with a buddy of theirs, Neil Engle, who also puts in time at Interlace Studios in Portland.

My Robotic Mother has played many gigs at their old high school in Molalla and performed at events such as The Next Big Thing Tour held at the Roseland Theater in Portland and The Battle of the Bands held last summer in Molalla. Currently the band has no shows lined up but is working hard at getting an album out sometime in May or June of this year.

"I love everything about the band. I get to play music and hang out with my two best friends. ... Couldn't ask for much more than that," stated Ward.

To hear some of My Robotic Mother's earlier stuff, you can go to their MySpace webpage at www.myspace.com/myroboticmother or look for My Robotic Mother on YouTube for videos of the band's performances.

- If you or someone you know is in a band or performs any type of music in Clackamas County or at Clackamas Community College, Erik would love to get in touch with you. Feel free to e-mail him at chiefed@clackamas.edu.



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Above: Tyler Gentry belts out the lyrics to a song while jamming on the bass at Battle of the Bands in Molalla.

Left: Cody Ward focuses on plucking the strings of his guitar during Battle of the Bands.

Below: Trevor Stewart, the drummer from My Robotic Mother, bangs out a beat on the drums.



SPALDING: Grammy Award winning bassist has ties to CCC

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had taken the first step on her way to winning her Grammy, but there were plenty of steps to be taken to overcome the host of obstacles, the least of which being that she was less about showmanship as it is about jazz musicians, as well as classical musicians, put the music first," said Jason Spalding, a Clackamas alumni who is studying music composition at Portland State. "As a result, they are often overlooked when it comes to awards like the Grammy's because they may not have the right 'look' that will get them on the cover. We live in a capitalist society, a lot of emphasis is placed on musicians that make money for record companies, and not on 'pretty people' that lack the originality of jazz and classical musicians." Spalding, before conquering the musical world, first had to master the academic side of music that had always been difficult for her. Homeschooled until the age of 14, Spalding enrolled in the Northwest Academy a year before dropping out and attending Portland State University to get her degree. She then moved to Boston to study at



During the Portland Jazz Festival, Esperanza Spalding, presented by KMHD-FM Jazz radio 89.1, talks with CCC instructor and old friend, Brian Rose.

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Berklee College of Music, and graduated in three years.

Rose, who has remained in contact with Spalding over the years since teaching her the basics of jazz, said that school was especially hard for her and that she would return

home looking disheveled and unhealthy. Rose said that since finishing with school and getting back to pure music, she has returned to normal.

Life for Spalding hasn't changed much since she first held that Grammy award in

her hand in the Staples Center. In a press conference at PSU, she said that the biggest difference is that people recognize her when she's around town, but that things are always hectic when she comes home to visit. She does her best to see her friends, family and teachers while she's in Portland, but this year things were made busier than ever by her presence at the Portland Jazz Festival as the festival ambassador.

As he did last spring, Rose would like to bring Esperanza back out to CCC for a visit.

"I invited her to come out again. She loves to teach and really likes the vibe here, but her world just got a lot bigger and faster, so we'll just wait until things settle down a bit," said Rose, who said that he and Esperanza exchanged e-mails after she won her award. "I told her I was proud of her for winning and proud of the Academy for choosing art over popularity."

For the time being, it is a little too late to catch a glimpse of the home-grown, wild-haired bassist. By now, she is far across the country and will be performing in Cape Town, South Africa before the end of March. By mid-April, she'll have toured in Italy, France, Spain, the U.K. and Morocco, but she'll find her way home eventually. She always does.