



The Doctor is in ... *the groove*

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. THEOPOLIS

*Ezra and Jules
Holbrook talk
about the
revolution of
Dr. Theopolis
and how to get
people moving
for a good
cause*

BY JOANNE ZUHL
STAFF WRITER

None of the nine musicians in Dr. Theopolis would be considered funk or hip-hop artists. But when they come together as Dr. T, a fully-formed funkadelic groove busts forth, and the roster of Portland's musical who's who forms a new fly creature altogether, embodied by the enigmatic and simply unavoidable Mr. Fabulous.

If Mr. Fabulous, above, is the face of Dr. Theopolis, Ezra and Jules are the voice. They are the lyrical and managerial foundation behind what must surely rank among Portland's best live performances. It started on a lark, with the musicians sitting in a green room considering the outrageous incarnation of folk and progressive rocksters as funk, hip-hop and rap artists. But like Mom said, be careful what you wish for.

Nearly a decade on, Dr. T is still keeping people moving, in a way that nine white guys from Portland, Ore., would seem unlikely to do (a condition repeatedly pointed out to them with just

about every mention of the band). Nonetheless, Jules and Ezra insist that despite the over-the-top performances and the humor in their lyrics, this isn't a parody. They love this music. And if you can get up on stage, play funk until 3 a.m. and have the whole room on the dance floor, why not throw on the polyester suit to boot?

On Aug. 20, Dr. Theopolis and friends are lending their support for a benefit for the Jeremy Wilson Foundation, one of several charities the group's members are involved in. Wilson, who performs with Portland's The Dharma Bums and Pilot, along with Dr. T, formed the foundation to help pay major medical expenses for uninsured and underinsured musicians in the Pacific Northwest. Wilson himself was diagnosed with a congenital heart condition. In addition to this project, Dr. Theopolis has worked on the Deep Roots project, which pairs student writers at Roosevelt High School with professional musicians to produce a CD. They also support the Ethos Music Center, a Portland nonprofit that promotes music-based

education among youths in underserved communities. Dr. Theopolis has also helped raise money for The Rockstar Stella fund to help pay for a young child's treatment for a rare form of leukemia.

On stage, though, Dr. T is all about the fun — that's the reason the band exists. Go to a concert sometime, and you won't have any doubt about it.

Jules: When we started it in 2001, there was a trend that was just starting, that a lot of venues that had had music previously were getting DJs on Friday and Saturday nights and catering to a dance crowd. And we were seeing just a changing of the guard in the music venues. And we realized that there's a whole bunch of people out there who would come out and go dancing, and they're not necessarily the same type of people who would go to a rock club and stand there and nod their head.

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New background checks hurt experienced recovery workers

BY AMANDA WALDROUPE
STAFF WRITER

Unforeseen consequences of a state law designed to protect vulnerable citizens dependent on residential care is impacting people's abilities to find a job in social work. The negative impact is spurring the SEIU and social service advocates to have the law changed.

House Bill 2442 makes it illegal for organizations that provide residential care treatment to the elderly, disabled, adults in foster care, and the mentally ill to employ people who have committed certain crimes. The organizations affected by the law are limited to those that receive state funding.

In addition to obvious serious crimes, including murder, sexual assault, rape, violent assault, and sex crimes, the law also prevents people with drug-related convictions within the past 10 years from working in those settings.

The law took effect for people hired on or after July 28, 2009. It requires stronger background checks to be given to people applying for jobs at residential treatment centers. The law also applies

to people who already work in residential treatment centers but are attempting to transfer to a different facility or applying for a different job within the same organization.

HB 2442 was sponsored by Rep. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis).

The intention of the law is to protect vulnerable people from potential harm. But labor and social service advocates say the law is stopping people from working in a field they are qualified to work in — and relate to personally — and could potentially harm the efficacy of treatment programs.

"Sometimes their backgrounds make them better providers," says Megan Moyer, the senior political organizer for SEIU local 503, the labor union representing social workers. "They are exactly the right person to do that job because of their experience."

Moyer says the SEIU is working with various state agencies and other groups to have the law changed in the 2011 legislative session. She says it isn't possible to have the entire law revoked and also thinks that is not necessarily reasonable.

Instead, Moyer hopes a compromise is struck so that the "right balance" is found between protecting vulnerable people in care settings while still allowing qualified people to work in care settings.

One care setting that has been affected by the law and most concerns people is alcohol and drug addiction treatment facilities. Because many social services provide both drug and mental health treatment in their programs, employees of drug treatment programs also would have been subject to the rigorous background checks the law requires.

Erik Martin, policy and legislative liaison for the Addiction Counselor Certification Board of Oregon

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