

Refreshing Pop

WOW, Luna host lively ensembles.

The WOW Hall will host a night of refreshing, hummable pop Sunday, July 20, as the **Long Winters**, the **Carolines** and **Clem Snide** converge upon our humble burg. These three ensembles have quietly perfected what they do, which alternates between wistful, sunny and twisted pop. Long Winters frontman John Roderick played in Harvey Danger and formerly fronted the band Western State Hurricanes, which once upon a time was poised to sign with Sub Pop.

When that fell through, Roderick went on hiatus, taking a solo trek during the winter of 2000-2001 on foot from Amsterdam to Istanbul. A rowdy Alaskan native with a bad case of wanderlust, Roderick emerged in 2002 with a debut CD, *The Worst You Can Do Is Harm*. That release catapulted Roderick back into the limelight, along with the musicians who helped make that CD possible, former Harvey Danger frontman Sean Nelson and Death Cab For Cutie guitarist Chris Walla. The immediate critical acclaim *Harm* garnered inspired two coast-to-coast tours and a retreat back into the studio.

Songwriter Roderick and friends have crafted a powerful second effort that will dazzle fans of pop everywhere. On *When I Pretend To Fall*, we see Roderick stitching together his ideas into a more cohesive whole. Joined by many of the same musi-

cians who helped round out *Harm*, Pretend also features newcomers Scott McCaughey (Minus 5, Young Fresh Fellows) on boomerang harmonica, Jon Auer (Posies) on guitar and Peter Buck (REM) on mandolin. All told, 26 guest musicians contributed to *Pretend*, with the core-and-touring band being Sean Nelson, Eric Corson on bass and accordion, Michael Schilling on drums and of course Roderick contributing guitars, vocals, farfisa, lap steel, etc. Producer Ken Stringfellow (Posies, REM, Minus 5) also contributes vocals, piano, bass and kurtzweil.

After Roderick's epic walking journey, he said he became more comfortable in his own skin, and that shows in the mood of this CD. While the music and lyrics are definitely still quirky (as on "Prom Night at Hater High") we sense that his demons have loosened their grasp and the mood is lightened.

The Long Winters will be joined by two fantastic other bands. The Carolines hail from Portland and produce "pop with a '60s vintage flair," ideal for fans of both the Beach Boys and Pavement. You will surely be hearing more about this young fivesome in the future. Clem Snide is another distinctive songwriter with a brand new CD entitled *Soft Spot*. This show is definitely a must-see.



Clem Snide performs at WOW Hall on Sunday.

Luna Jazz Club will host an exciting evening of electronic jazz when **Echo** comes to town on Tuesday, July 22. Composed of duo Joy Askew and Takuya Nakamura, Echo is known for blending down-tempo electronic grooves and jazz standards with trumpet, voice and occasional Brazilian guitar flairs.

A native of England, Askew has toured the world and produced four solo CDs, *Tender City* (1996), *Gorgeous Creature* (1997), *When* (1998) and *The Same* (2000). Nakamura and Askew hooked up in the New York City nightclub, Shine. The pair began to collaborate, and there seemed at once to be a shared sense of jazz emerging

in a non-traditional, fresh way.

For instance, early on in their collaboration, Nakamura shared with Askew a new "bubbly" track he'd been working on. Instantly, Askew was compelled to sing along with the Cole Porter standard "I've Got You Under My Skin." Both recognized right away that something special was happening and recorded the whole thing in about 20 minutes. Since then, Echo's approach has continued to be a happy marriage of known and unknown, expected and unexpected, electronica and traditional jazz currents. Luna is a great, intimate place to see such a show, with endless possibilities of groove, jazz, pop, and lounge. **EW**

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