



Dan Bern plays Café Paradiso
Thursday, Nov. 20.

Busy Bern

Singer-songwriter dubbed 'the next Dylan.'

I've told you about acoustic singer/songwriter **Dan Bern** before; Bern's been called "the next Bob Dylan" and "the Dylan for the skateboard generation." "Dan Bern's the shit," according to Ani DiFranco. While Bern will say he's nothing more than "just another guy from Iowa with a guitar and a van," his legion of fans continues to grow. With the March 2003 release of Bern's newest CD, *Fleeting Days*, his fans have more to love.

The Bern legacy began in 1997 with his debut EP, *Dog Boy Van*. His 1998 release *Smartie Mine* got him noticed, but it was 2001's *New American Language* that put him on the map. He also has a new five-song EP called *The Swastika EP* with a tracklist that humorously and bravely enters into the realm of politics with songs entitled "Talkin' Al Kida Blues," "My Little Swastika," "Jail," "Friends," and "Lithuania."

Lyrics to these songs are posted on his website, www.danbern.com. The busy Bern also has a new book available, *World Cup*, a 60-page diary of Bern's and Slim Nickel's June 2003 European tour. *World Cup* is chock full of "stories, lyrics, poems, musings and more" along with a different 5-song EP that was written on the tour. Bern's a wiz on the acoustic guitar, and his lyrics are sharply witty, funny, poignant, and intelligent. He's inspired by pop culture, and his uniquely American perspective seeks to find common ground and an understanding of what it means for all of us to be trapped together in this "hectic, fame-debased, information-overloaded world" we have created. Bern will be appearing Thursday, Nov. 20 at Eugene's Café Paradiso.

If it's funk that gets your butt in gear, you'll want to boogie over to the Wild Duck Thursday instead. Funk fusion band **Garaj Mahal** returns to Eugene with improvisational and inspired rhythms. The four members of Garaj Mahal: Kai Eckhardt on bass (John McLaughlin Trio and Chick Corea), guitarist Fareed Haque (Sting, Joe Zawinul), drummer Alan Hertz (KVHW, Steve Kimock Band) and keyboardist Eric Levy don't know when to stop, and they treat audiences to some mind-blowing performances.

Haque, a Blue Note Recording artist, seamlessly weaves classical and jazz-fusion into the rhythms laid down by Hertz and Eckhardt, creating music of a "soul-searching intensity." Though Garaj Mahal has only been an entity since May 2000, fans quickly latched on to the group. You can expect their first Harmonize Records release later this year.

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Save some energy for the next night, as **The Motet** will rock the WOW Hall. Together since 1998, this Boulder, Colorado-based group plays funk, rock and jazz laced with rich Latin and African influences. The polyrhythmic group first came about when bandleader Dave Watts and a variety of friends played as the Motet on Halloween night in 1998. Early on, the group's goal was to "focus on improvisational exploration."

Watts initially named the band The Dave Watts Motet, opting out of the standard numerical prefix defining the number of members, surmising that club owners might protest if he advertised as a quartet but showed up as a trio, for instance. Thus, The Motet was born. (Motet, by the way, is a word for a polyphonic song of a sacred nature, especially one accompanied by dance.) Since then, the group has traveled to Cuba to study the musical forms of traditional Cuban music, and been inspired by the many forms of Latin and African rhythms. Watts rules the drum kit, and he's played with everyone from Tony Furtado to Keller Williams to Shockra and Theory of Everything. Keyboardist Greg Raymond and bassist Garret Sayers (a founding member of the Miracle Orchestra) are joined by percussionist Scott Messersmith and recent addition guitarist Mark Donovan. When you're ready to get your "Americubafrikan groove" on, head for the Motet!

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