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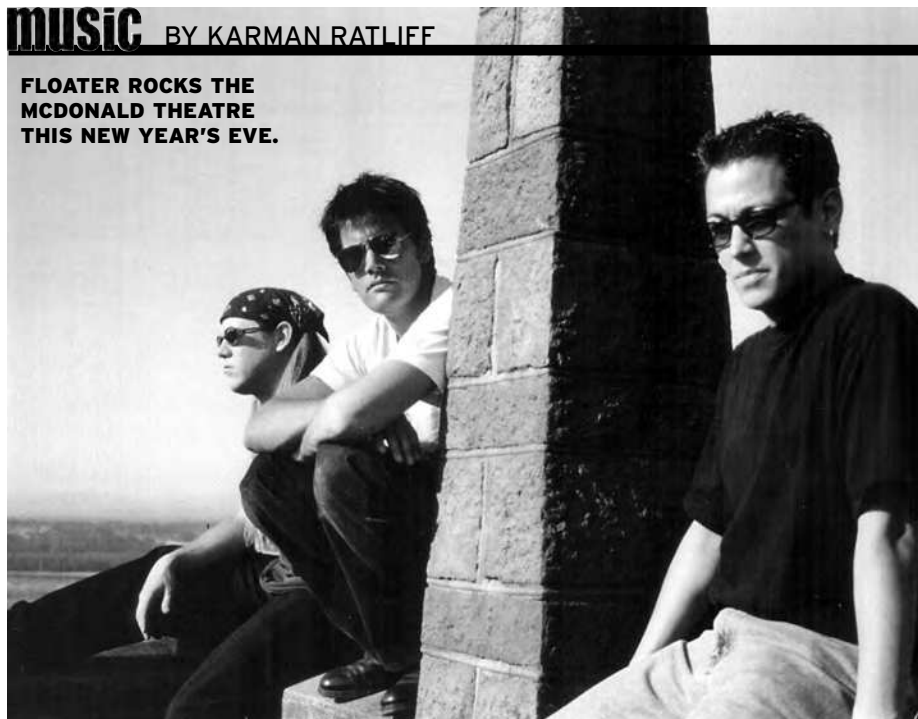
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MUSIC

BY KARMAN RATLIFF

**FLOATER ROCKS THE
MCDONALD THEATRE
THIS NEW YEAR'S EVE.**



Ring in the New Year

Sounds abound to kick off '04.

If you're looking for something to do on Dec. 31, look no further. Whether it's smooth Latin jazz, West African drumming or some good local hard rock you're hoping to hear, chances are, you can find it next Wednesday night to help you ring in the new year.

Eugene's favorite heavy rock trio **Floater** will be doing a set off of their critically acclaimed album, *Alter*, at the McDonald Theatre with opening band **Assisted Living** in an all-ages show. After selling out at the WOW Hall three times over the course of the year, the decision was made

ballads sound like fun, check out Sam Bond's beginning at 9 pm. For \$4, you get **Tom Heini**, who recently put out his new album, *With or Without Me*, in "Stereoke," which allows listeners to sing along to such favorites as "Three-Way," a powerful song about a man and his love triangle. **Toad in the Hole**, a fun, high-energy Irish band will share the stage, along with the alternative country sounds of the **Whopner County Country All-Stars**. Altogether, this sounds like a sure bet for an eclectic crowd and a great way to start off your year.

The Clarion Hotel in Springfield (3280

WHETHER IT'S SMOOTH LATIN JAZZ, WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING OR SOME GOOD LOCAL HARD ROCK YOU'RE HOPING TO HEAR, CHANCES ARE, YOU CAN FIND IT NEXT WEDNESDAY NIGHT.

to upgrade to the larger venue in order to accommodate all of the hometown fans that will inevitably want to kick off the New Year with them. Doors open at 8 pm. Tix are \$16 adv., \$18 at the door.

Shelley James Musicbox will perform a 21-and-over show at the Wild Duck starting at 9:30 pm. The local diva and her band present a powerful blend of pop, soul, funk and everything in between on their third independently produced album. James and the four band members are known for putting on an electric show filled with driving dance moves and good music. Limited seating is available. Tix are \$8 adv., \$10 at the door.

For a truly international experience, check out the **Last Night Community New Year Party and Dance Event**, featuring West African drum and dance, Brazilian percussion and traditional music of Haiti and the Caribbean. **Wongai**, a dance group from Guinea, is led by master dancer Youssouf Koumbassa, formerly of the National Ballet of Guinea, and accompanied by a djembe orchestra. Also check out **Gaga**, traditional music showing the interchange between African and Caribbean rhythms, and **Samba Já**, a wild, funky, infectious percussion ensemble offering street music from all parts of Brazil and the Americas. The party starts at 9 pm at the Core Star Dojo, 439 W. 2nd, (one block from REI); \$5-\$10 sliding scale cover.

If Irish drinking music or twisted country

Gateway) will be hosting **Little Charlie and the Nightcats**, doing songs off their newest album, *That's Big*. This 30-year-old Sacramento based blues and jump group, which is signed with Alligator Records, plays a wide assortment of music ranging from jazz and blues to West Coast swing and rockabilly. Little Charlie Baty is famous across the country for his acrobatic style of blues guitar, and together with singer/songwriter/harmonica player Rick Estrins' lyrics and harp abilities the band stands out as a new blues classic. Tickets are \$20 and doors open at 7 pm.

Ritmo de la Noche, a Latin jazz quartet based in Eugene, will play at Jo Federigo's lounge. Guitars, keyboards, bass guitars and drums with Brazilian, Spanish and Cuban style riffs meld effortlessly with the blues to create a truly unique sound. The jazz starts around 9:30 pm. Cover is \$10.

Wrapping up this year's blues review is the **Casts of Thousands, Nicolette Helm & Queen Bee**, who will be performing with **Teddy Boy Roix** and the **Soulstirs** at the Black Forest Tavern. Helm and her three back-up singers work together exquisitely, belting out some unforgettable four-part harmonies, recreating blues classics and impressing fans with original songs. Paired with the acoustic rockabilly style of Teddy Boy Roix and some other surprise special guests, this free event, which starts at 9:30 pm, will surely be a blues event full of new and old favorites.

EW

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