



Toad in the Hole plays Luckey's Wednesday.

Irish Licks

Luckey's hosts St. Paddy's party.

Looking for a lively way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day this Wednesday? Let **Toad in the Hole** be your ace. Luckey's tavern will host the Eugene band beginning at 8:30 pm, with an open Irish jam kicking off the festivities from 4 to 6 pm, with everyone welcome to bring instruments and join in or just listen and enjoy. Wednesday's show will also be a CD release for the six-piece band's *Alleyway Rover*, which follows 2003's sold-out *Piss Away Your Charms*.

I recently spoke with vocalist Matty Hayward-McDonald to find out more. An upbringing in the Pennsylvania Appalachians led to Hayward-McDonald's early love affair with Celtic music, fueled by an active folk, bluegrass and Celtic scene and parents who would take him to shows.

In Eugene, Hayward-McDonald spent time at the weekly Irish jams at Sam Bond's Garage. "I used to go down there and listen to music, and I was inspired one time to actually stand up and do some singing," he says. "From there, I wanted to put something together." Toad came to life three years ago.

Toad's focus is on very traditional aspects of Celtic music, such as traditional instrumentation and grouping a series of jigs and reels together into a theme, with a lyrical jolt thrown in, motivated by The Pogues' high-energy musical mayhem.

"Primarily, with most of the writing lyrically, I've tried to infuse a more modern interpretation of Celtic music," explains Hayward-McDonald. Liz Meyers (currently a member of Eugene Highlanders Pipe Band) contributes flute, pennywhistle, shuttle and highland pipes. Jason Hartman Kelly (who formerly played in Eugene's ska band Varicoasters) plays a raucous guitar. Joel Kenney studied the bodhran, a Celtic drum, and fell into Toad following an Irish jam. Kathryn Claire delights vocally and on the violin (having a lot of experience as a solo performer), while John Dresdner (formerly of Eugene bands Bicker and Soda Jerk) plays the stand up bass.

Alleyway Rover is the band's first studio recording, and it's a crowd-pleasing mix of post-Pogues' style original songs, with traditional jigs, reels and ballads. Quick music lesson: jigs and reels are differentiated by their time signatures. Jigs are in 6/8 time, similar to a waltz, (the beer-spilling tunes — they make you want to pogo!) while reels are a more straight-forward 4/4 or 2/4 time. Toad in the Hole will get the crowd on their feet, and the madness won't end until band and audience are exhausted, sweaty and crying in their beers from sheer joy. Erin Go Bragh!

Adelaide, Australia pop phenoms **Fruit** will make two appearances Saturday night at Café Paradiso; an all ages show starting at 7 pm and a 21+ show at 10 pm. Fruit wowed audiences in past years at the Willamette Valley Folk Festival as a unique, women-fronted, harmony-driven pop powerhouse.

Formed in 1995, the five multi-instrumentalists (three women and two men) craft energetic pop that cannot be pigeonholed, and draws from folky blues, soulful jazz, and harmonious grooves. Acoustic and electric guitar, drums and horns combine playfully into uplifting ballads that span the emotional gamut from rootsy and homespun to soaring and passionate.

Fruit began when the three lead women learned they'd been booked to play a show at the same venue on the same night. That twist of fate catapulted them together and locked them into a lifestyle of ceaselessly touring the world, playing festivals and winning admirers everywhere. The five recently wrapped up recording on their fourth studio album, during which time they moved from Adelaide to a house outside Philadelphia, where they worked with Grammy-winning producer David Ivory (Erykah Badu, Patti LaBelle, The Roots).

In 2002, Fruit released an award-winning live CD, *Live at the Basement*, recorded at a Sydney nightclub. The group has recently released its first acoustic album, *Fruit the Trio Album — Live At the Church*. **ew**

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