

Lyrical Lass

Songstress McCue and power punk headline this week.

Yearning for a night of pop/punk mayhem? Then look no further than Diablo's Downtown Lounge Friday night, as Eugene four-piece punk band **The Anxieties** take the stage. Formed as a trio in summer of 2003 by guitarist and vocalist Scott Von Rocket, Dylhouse Von Haus and Tristan Tower, the band recently welcomed Matt Adore back from San Diego.

The addition allowed Tower to switch to lead guitar, which fleshed out the band's sound and also gave Von Rocket the opportunity to add (the occasional) guitar solo to The Anxieties' songs, something The Wristockets' spastic punk had no time for. Von Rocket and Von Haus previously claimed allegiance to The Wristockets, and while Tower currently plays with Monkee Torture and The Lo Cals, he has played with other local bands too numerous to list.

Von Rocket says the death of The Wristockets was the impetus he needed to create the Anxieties. "Dylan and I were wanting to still play together, because after the Wristockets broke up it had been probably six months since we had played together, and we were really missing it."

He adds, "We needed to get something going again, and we didn't feel right getting a new bass player and calling it The Wristockets. There just wouldn't be the

same chemistry without Pat [Dies, bassist and vocalist]."

Von Rocket says that he and Von Haus wanted to go in a different direction musically from what they'd done in the recent past, and he describes The Anxieties as "quite a bit slower in general than The Wristockets were."

The Anxieties boast a raw, energetic punk sound that benefits from the addition of a second guitar because the songs can be shaped around two distinctly different guitar parts, which was not possible in The Wristockets. "We're trying to have [Tristan] do some textural things which are different from what I'm doing to make it a little more interesting," says Von Rocket.

Von Rocket's other band, rockabilly punk outfit Switchblade Hearts, was just resuscitated and is playing shows again, thanks to their drummer John returning from a year in Stockton, Cal. Von Rocket won't go so far as to describe Switchblade Hearts as a "full-time" band, but says, "We're officially off hiatus."

Singer/songwriter and lead guitarist **Ann McCue** is coming to town for two shows. First, at the Brandborg Winery in Elkton on Monday and a Café Paradiso show in support of Chris Whitley on Tuesday.

McCue is celebrating the release of her second CD (the first to be released in the U.S.) and first for Messenger Records, *Roll*. The Australian-born musician claims Lucinda Williams as a fan, and it was last year's national tour with Williams that catapulted McCue into the spotlight.

The youngest of eight kids, McCue aspired to a career in music but chilled those dreams to finish a degree in filmmaking. She then tried novel writing, but needing a break from writing, she answered an ad for lead guitarist in a female pop band. The band, Girl Monstar, who toured Australia with the Ramones and the Buzzcocks, released two albums and was nominated for an Aussie Grammy, then broke up.

Not about to give up her dreams, McCue played every gig she could, including a year on the bar circuit in Saigon, to polish her guitar chops. After returning to Australia, she joined with another ill-fated band, Eden A.K.A., which relocated to Los Angeles.

McCue says she quit Eden A.K.A. to focus on being a solo artist after the band "languished in major label hell" in L.A. for two years. That was a smart move, as McCue is impressing folks all over the country with her superb guitar work and plain-spoken lyrical style. McCue's a triple threat. *Billboard* magazine calls her a "a potent singer, thoughtful songwriter and tough guitarist," who shifts easily from barroom rock to Jimmie Hedrix-style guitar freak-outs. **EW**



Anne McCue plays Café Paradiso Tuesday.

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