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## music BY VANESSA SALVIA



Faun Fables' Dawn McCarthy  
plays Sam Bond's  
Thursday, April 1.

## Songtelling

Dawn McCarthy, Willy Porter and more.

Two equally compelling shows will take place on Thursday night this week. Dawn "The Faun" McCarthy returns to Sam Bond's Garage to debut songs from **Faun Fables** most recent CD, *Family Album*, the group's third recording but first for new label Drag City.

On *Family Album*, McCarthy is joined as usual by Gorilla Sleepytime Museum's Nils Frykdahl providing vocals, instrumentation and song collaboration. Oakland, Calif., resident McCarthy brings in several other guest musicians, notably Noe Venable and McCarthy's own mother, sister and brother.

McCarthy is a magical songwriter with a haunting voice reminiscent of Cat Power's Chan Marshall and a style of performing she calls "songtelling." Her voice and music is otherworldly, existing in a perpetual state of twilight calm with enchanted lyrics pulled from the subconscious. In this series of songs and ballads, McCarthy celebrates the powerful yet tenuous web of familial relationships: memories of a piano-playing mother, the family dog in the song "Lucy Belle," a dead son in "Joshua," daughters straddling the potent years between girlhood and womanhood in "Preview," and even the household mouse in the track "Mouse Song."

Samurai Duck will host Portland group **This is a Process of a Still Life** Thursday, along with Burke Jam. The band, bassist Jason Ward, guitarist Ben Rouner, drummer Gary Jimmerson (who also plays melodica), keyboardist and percussionist Grier Phillips and guitarist Scott Kennedy came together in spring of 2003 in Missoula, Mont. and traveled to the northwest to make a debut album.

Recorded in Portland by Slackjaw member Rob Bartelson, the CD is an instrumental landscape of minimalist melodies, founded on drum and bass with guitar rhythms forming and merging to create depth and emotion. Viola provided by Caitlin Olsen on two tracks adds a luscious gloss. Fans of Mogwai,

Tortoise or Maserati will find plenty to admire in this band's work, which reveals new depths and moods with each listen.

Milwaukee-based musician **Willy Porter** graces Cafe Paradiso's stage Saturday, as he celebrates the release of his brand new live CD, *High Wire Live*. Porter has performed everywhere in the U.S. and Europe. *High Wire Live* is a documentary of his last year and a half on the road (including stops in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Portland and Birmingham, England) and features his most requested songs: "Angry Words," the funky "Tribe," "Dishwater Blonde," and "Mystery," among others.

Porter performs solo, just him and his guitar, and develops a close rapport with his audiences, who have come to respect his fleet-fingered guitar playing and quiet, unassuming songwriting. While Porter is not known to perform other people's songs, he did include one cover on *High Wire Live*: "You Stay Here" by Richard Schindell, an American songwriter living in Argentina. This song also features *High Wire Live*'s only guest musician, Jethro Tull's electric guitarist Martin Barre. The song was recorded while Porter accompanied Jethro Tull on a European tour.

Porter's relaxed stage presence allows the true star of his show — his fretwork — to shine. *Acoustic Guitar* magazine describes Porter as "the triple threat: — great singing, quality songwriting and the apparent influences of fellow guitarists Leo Kottke and Michael Hedges. *Relix* magazine gives him the ultimate props, calling his 2003 self-titled release a great record, but one that barely serves him justice. The magazine echoes many fans' opinions, that *High Wire Live* "captures the personable, intimate musician in real time."

While fans appreciated Porter's past CDs (Porter debuted in 1990 with *The Trees Have Soul*) it's really his live performances they relish, and this CD gives them yet another way to keep Porter's rootsy sound alive between shows.

EW

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