

Danny Barnes



Beyond Bluegrass

Barnes and Neufeld light up Luna.

The intimate listening room at Luna Jazz Club in Eugene is the perfect place to see guitar duo **Danny Barnes** and **Jon Neufeld**, who are scheduled to perform April 8th. Barnes, a perennial favorite of fans in Eugene, is now based in the tiny town of Port Hadlock, Wash., two hours northwest of Seattle, but originally hails from a small town in Texas, and he lived in Austin for 35 years.

While in Austin, he fronted the Bad Livers, a high-energy band that performed bluegrass covers of classic punk tunes done at breakneck speed. Barnes' rebellious nature won him fans all over the country, both as a bandleader and a "rural sophisticate" solo performer. Barnes has honed his guitar and banjo craft for decades, and his personable, down-home demeanor is enhanced by the ease with which he shifts from quoting the Romantic poetry of William Blake, to talking about the Seattle-area jazz gods he has collaborated with, to his countrified version of the traditional tune "Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy."



Jon Neufeld

Barnes most recently collaborated with Seattle-based duo Tucker Martine and Wayne Horvitz on the CD *Mylab* and a small, highly regarded series of shows in Seattle. Barnes has his own relatively new record out, *Dirt on the Angel*, featuring many popular Seattle musicians such as Amy Denio and Garey Shelton, who performed with Bo Diddley. Barnes specifically intended *Dirt on the Angel* to cover as many genres in traditional American music as possible; rhythms from the late 1800s to post-modern "jazz-folk" are represented.

Performing with Neufeld, lead guitarist of Portland-based bluegrass outfit Jackstraw, gives Barnes a chance to surround himself with the traditional bluegrass I feel he does best. Jackstraw plays both traditional bluegrass festivals or rowdy college bars comfortably. The group's songs can be fiery and passionate, such as "All this Time," from the 2003 self-titled release or mellow and

thoughtful, like "The Ballad of Jamie Lynn."

At Luna, expect the duo to shine on gypsy jazz, country, folk, bluegrass and more. There's nothing this pair won't tackle, such as their instrumentals: 11-minute "Wabash Blues" or 10-minute "Whiskey Before Breakfast." Barnes does sing a bit on "Honkey Tonk Blues." You won't want to miss this.

On Saturday, Luckey's in Eugene is hosting San Francisco's **Chemistry Set**, a band with a smooth blend of musical flavors, mixing jazzy, world-beat inspired grooves with well-crafted songs with a social conscious.

Drummer Dickie Ogden, keyboardist/vocalist Patty Hughes, mandolinist/vocalist Baba Ndjhoni, bassist Joel Oppenheimer and guitarist/vocalist Sven Eberlein combine their extraordinary backgrounds and experiences into a powerhouse quintet. Ndjhoni has performed with Nigerian guitar prodigy Soji Odukogbe and spent three years in Zaire in the Peace Corps. Ogden has performed with G-Love and Special Sauce's Jimmy Prescott. Oppenheimer is a case manager for San Francisco's homeless population and has been a student of Kai Eckhardt (John McLaughlin Trio, Garaj Mahal), while Hughes has recorded with Gigolo Aunts and Jack Drag.

Together for seven years, Chemistry Set has continually expanded its musical boundaries yet maintained an earthy, lively energy. The group's personal and musical beliefs come through in the songwriting: Diverse musical styles all have a common ground, as do people who can communicate through the universal language of music.

Chemistry Set has been described by Jan Adams, WFIT-FM DJ, as "a modernized Moody Blues taken to a whole new level," while *The East Bay Express* says the group "dwells in the groove between hippie rock, jazz, bluegrass and Congolese rumba, coming up with a tight undulating mix that is sure to trip you out." **EW**

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