

Fresh Pop

Ship releases CD, Folk Fest fills up weekend.

WOW Hall hosts two great shows this week, starting with **Great Big Sea** on the 20th. The quintet hailing from St. Johns, Newfoundland began in March of 1993 as a means of employment after Sea's members graduated from college.

They have since played and toured relentlessly, first throughout Canada (where they've sold more than a million albums) and later the U.S. They have just released their latest, *Something Beautiful*, on the Zoë/Rounder label. *Beautiful* includes 10 new originals along with poppier versions of traditional tunes, including "John Barbour," "Chafe's Celidh" and "Beat the Drum."

Members Alan Doyle, Bob Hallet, Sean McCann, Murray Foster (replacing Darrell Power on bass) and Kris MacFarlane imbue their music with a lightness of heart, weaving the threads of the centuries-old music of their homeland with today's roots rock sensibilities into a thoroughly modern tapestry. The band's rich vocal harmonies are an instant appeal, as is the high energy they pour into each show.

In addition to *Something Beautiful*, their latest project is a career-spanning DVD that showcases the band at a packed house in Ottawa and features interviews and backstage highlights. All 14 of the band's videos have also been compiled on the DVD.

The next show to add to your calendar is **Taarka** and **Albino!** at WOW Hall on Friday. Berkeley's 14-piece Afro-beat ensemble Albino! draws inspiration from the legendary Nigerian Afro-jazz musician Fela Kuti and features a member of his band, native Nigerian percussionist Friday Jumbo. Jumbo played in Kuti's historic Africa 70 ensemble, and Albino! vocalist Geoffrey Omadhebo is known for his work with greats Sonny Okosun and O.J. Ekemode. Keyboardist Bob Crawford lists Spearhead on his resumé.

Other Albino! members include drummer Michael Pinkham (Superbacana), guitarist Cal Reichenbach (Starvin Like Marvin), bassist Kevin Blair, percussionist/dancers Kim Agnew and Robyn Smith. The four horn players Nathan Endsley (Hamsa Lila), trumpeter Clyde Sutliff (Eek-A-Mouse, Michael Rose, Charlie Hunter, Joshua Redmon) Mike Davis and Kevin

Brunetti complete the all-star lineup.

Co-billed on that show is **Taarka**, featuring Hanuman's Jarrod Kaplan on percussion, ThaMuseMeant's David Tiller on mandolins, acoustic bassist Jason Flores and violinist Enion Pelta. Taarka, based in Portland, crafts what's been called "Seismic Gypsy Hypno Jazz." The band unites a world of influences creating a textural blend of bluegrass, Eastern European melodies, jazz, African beats, and freestyle funk.

Kaplan immerses himself in his instrumentation, surrounding himself with djembe drums, dumbeks and hand cymbals, while on his left ankle he wears silkworm cocoons and Guinean seed pods and on his right ankle, Pakistani bells.

Pelta's luscious violin anchors the band's distinctive sound, while the mandolin and versatile bass highlight multifaceted rhythms.

The band will play music from the recent release, *Even Odd Bird*.

Spend your weekend at the **Willamette Valley Folk Festival**, which features a diverse and intriguing lineup of local and regional acts plus nationally recognized names. The weekend kicks off Friday at 4 pm with Indian tabla drumming and encompasses 40 acts on five different stages.

With acts as varied as Eugene's only all-girl glam rockers, **The Ovulators**, to folk songstress Laura Kemp, from Obo Addy's Ghanaian music to spoken word poetry, there's something for every age and every taste.

Eugene's **Abandon Ship** is celebrating its second release, *Happy Endings*, with a CD release party at Luckey's this Friday, along with **Yeltsin**. The Ship trio, brothers Nathan (drums), Damian (bass) and Gabriel (guitar), who all sing, formed here in 2001.

Growing up, the

brothers visited Eugene many times as camp counselors, though they lived elsewhere. Damian married a camp co-worker and settled here, enticing Nathan to leave his life in Maui and Gabriel to depart from Big Bear (a snowboard spot in California). The brothers yearned to have a band, and Eugene became home base.

While the songs for *Happy Endings* were written about the same time as those for their 2002 debut, this CD showcases more complex melodies, more distortion and a thicker sound while still retaining their fresh pop feel.

"We definitely experimented with *Happy Endings*," says Nathan. The brothers "got more of a bare bones, spacier sound" their first time in the studio. "The second album was more aggressive because we'd taken the more atmospheric songs already," Nathan explains. The band also had an external producer the second time around, which brought out the band's untapped moods and allowed an edgier aspect to come through. Songs for a third CD are already written.

Says Nathan, "We'd like to do an album a year. We're pretty prolific songwriters."

This fruitful approach to writing has also enmeshed Nathan and the band into the Eugene poetry slam scene, where they find appreciable support for their intelli-

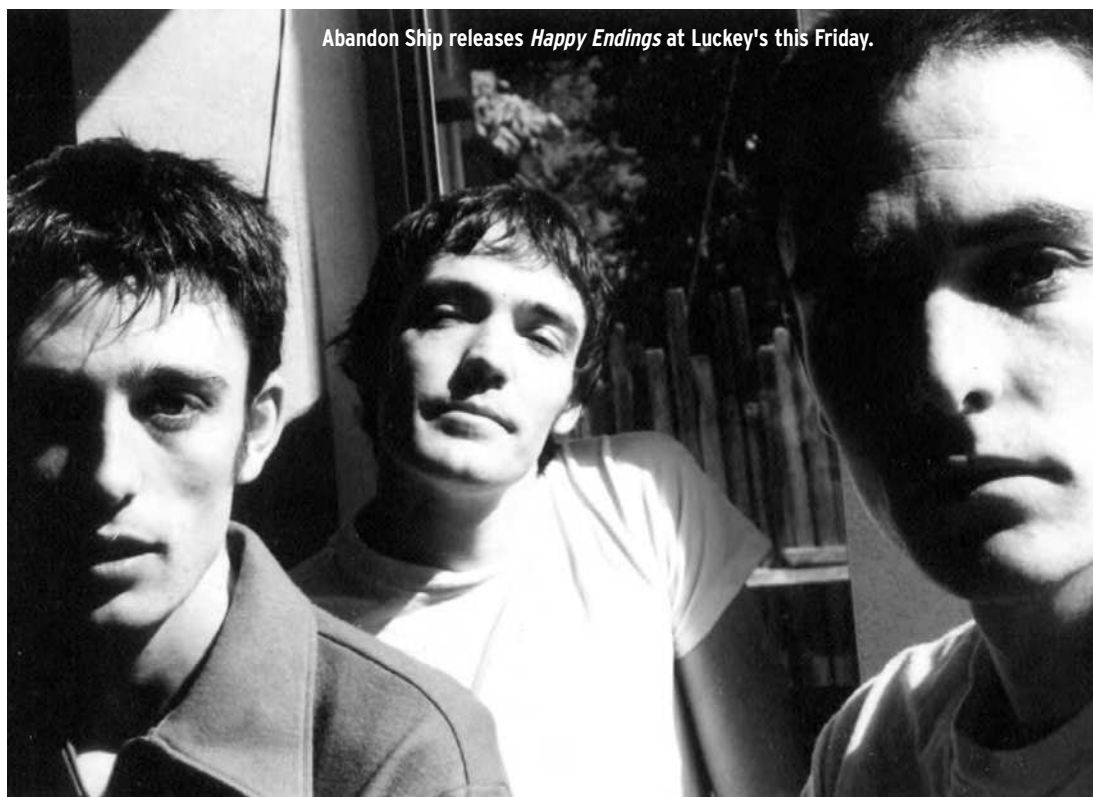
gent, observant lyrics.

Next, head to the McDonald on the 25th for a fantastic line-up of **Sleater-Kinney** and **Quasi**. Carrie Brownstein, Corin Tucker and Janet Weiss are three of the most talked about women in rock, and deservedly so — the music they make as Sleater-Kinney is the polar opposite of the lyrically bland, prefab music that saturates today's pop world.

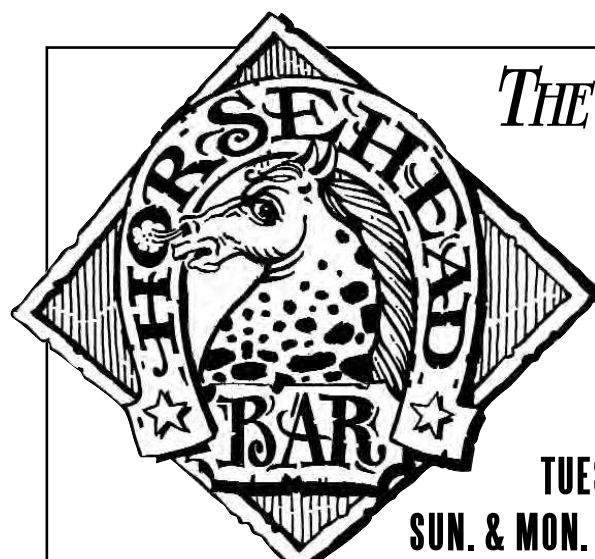
The band came together in Olympia, Wash. in 1994 and captivated a nation with an unpredictable brand of musical bravado. Tucker's warbling vocals can be thrilling, earnest and accusatory all in the same phrase. Weiss and Brownstein contribute a forceful undercurrent that can pull a song in many different directions at once. Throw in lyrical vehemence and momentum that builds and breaks like a flash flood and you've got one threatening package.

Brownstein, a.k.a. Carrie Kinney, was still in Excuse 17 when she joined S-K (named for a local road in Washington), while Tucker was formerly one half of duo Heavens to Betsy. Weiss does double-duty as drummer for Quasi, along with her ex-husband Sam Coomes (who once played with Elliott Smith).

Coomes is a loveable grouch whose laconic style and fatalistic outlook makes us feel better about ourselves, and Weiss is his perfect foil. I would not miss this show. **EW**



Abandon Ship releases *Happy Endings* at Luckey's this Friday.



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