

# Summer Sounds

Local ensembles put new sounds in CDs and in clubs.

**W**ith the demise — or is it hibernation? — of the Seventh Species composers collective a few years ago, Eugene lost an important forum for contemporary art music written by local composers. It's no coincidence that a great flowering of American music occurred in the 1930s and '40s when two such composers groups (supported by the likes of Aaron Copland and Henry Cowell) thrived in New York City.

So it's gratifying to see the debut of the Eugene Composers Collective, whose members take their bows at Sam Bond's Garage at a free concert (donation suggested) on Sunday, June 13. Dedicated to the "promotion, creation and performance of new or experimental music and collaborative art," the group will present more than a dozen new works at this show. They will include a variety of combinations, including cello and spo-

ken voice, string quartets, microtonal guitars, a sax trio and much more.

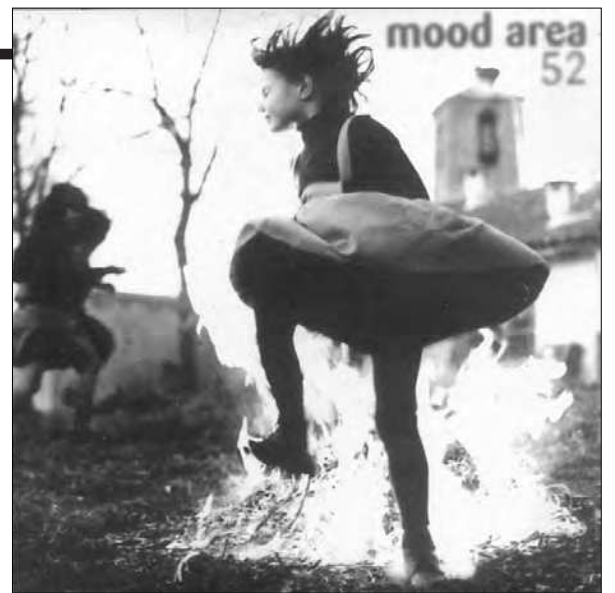
The collective appears just after the apparent expiration of another important and entertaining outlet for new music, the 100th Monkey Ensemble, created by UO music students some years ago to perform new music by its members and others. I never failed to enjoy the group's concerts, including the final one last month, which showed how some West Coast composers have been able to create music that's simultaneously adventurous and accessible.

Except for a brief coda, that show ended with a moody, moving chamber piece by one of its veteran members, Kurt Doles; his fine work over the years with 100th Monkey makes me eager to hear his upcoming release on California's prestigious Cold Blue label. Doles, a clarinetist, is staying in Eugene and will lend his new music expertise to the Oregon Festival of American Music.

Another 100th Monkey founder, flutist/composer/improviser Daniel Heila, is also back in Eugene, performing up and down the coast with his eye-5 trio (which includes local bassist Rob Kohler) and releasing an evocative live recording. I hope these are signs that Eugene is becoming a place for art music composers to stay, not just to learn their craft before moving on to metropoli. And I hope 100th Monkey will continue in some fashion after its members depart the UO.

Other signs of life for Northwest art music include the splendid eponymous CD on rocketboy records by Eugene's **Mood Area 52**. The group (Michael Roderick on accordion, Amy Danziger, cello, Dan Schmid, bass, and occasional guests) has progressed from playing traditional tangos at weddings to working in more and more original material, in the spirit of the great 20th-century new tango composer Astor Piazzolla, often accompanying classic silent films like *Nosferatu*. Their fine CD does full justice to the group's witty, slightly off-center take on tango, and is suitable for dancing or immobile admiration.

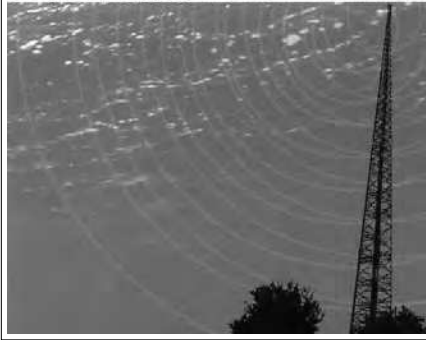
Fans of Mood Area 52 should also check fellow Piazzolla devotees **3 Leg Torso**. *Astor in Paris*, the fabulous second album by the Portland-based quintet, melds classical elegance, pop melodicism and gypsy dances into a deliciously swinging confection. Accordionist/ saxist and musical director Courtney Von Drehle and violinist (and occasional trumpet) Bela Balogh bring a klezmer feel to the proceedings, while Rob Lewis's mallet instruments and Gary Irvine's percussion add rich textures; Skip Bowman's bass holds it together. Their appearance was a highlight of the Willamette Valley Folk Festival last month, but their jazzy, nuanced sound is best appreciated indoors, either on CD or in their occasional club appearances here.



While it's great to see so much original music emanating from the Northwest, we shouldn't neglect some Oregon old music masters. **Ensemble De Organographia** has recorded music of the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, Sumerians, Italian Renaissance, early ragtime masters, and much more. The Portland-based period instrument group's new album, *French Music of the 14th Century*, on the always intriguing North Pacific label, features the music of Guillaume de Machaut and other composers of the Ars Nova period.

Employing voice, recorder, small organ, percussion, harp (Eugene's own Laura Zaerr), and colorful antique instruments such as rebec, naerks, vielle, gittern and more, this accomplished ensemble really brings this still-compelling music to life. Like the contemporary sounds of the other Northwest groups mentioned here, the shock of the new retains its spirit, even seven centuries later. **EW**

## 3 LEG TORSO ASTOR IN PARIS



**Featuring:**  
 Lost At Last  
 Hamsa Lila  
 Alpha Ya Ya Diallo  
 Jai Uttal  
 Joanne Rand  
 Joules Graves  
 Clan Dyken  
 Jah Levi  
 Sasha Butterfly  
 Tina Malia  
 Citizens Band  
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TUNES ON TAP

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On the verge of blowing up in a major way **2bucks Short**, a melodic punk 4-some, has what it takes to make it big! Not only are they rockin' it locally, they've secured several dates on this summer's Vans Warped Tour. I'm telling ya now, get on their bandwagon before it gets too full!

Pick up their debut album *The Positionary Mission* and see Kevin, Scott, Trevor, and Matt live this Saturday night! Check out [www.2Bucksshort.com](http://www.2Bucksshort.com) and Eugene Weekly's clubs page for show information.

[www.PabstBlueRibbon.com](http://www.PabstBlueRibbon.com)

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