

Poet's Sense

Peter Mulvey at Paradiso.

Eugene's tireless promoter of folk music, Mike Meyer, is leaving us to further his education in Portland. But before he goes, we're one more folk show richer, as he brings **Peter Mulvey** to Café Paradiso's stage on Thursday, June 17. Mulvey is touring to support his new CD, *Kitchen Radio*, his first new material since 2002's *Ten Thousand Mornings*, a cover disc of songs by Randy Newman, Elvis Costello, Gillian Welch and others.

2003 saw the release of *Redbird*, an album featuring Mulvey along with Kris Delmhorst and Jeffrey Foucault as a trio. Between albums Mulvey has kept busy writing music for dance and theater performances, including Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind* and Amiri Baraka's *Primitive World*. On *Kitchen Radio*, Mulvey proves why he's such a celebrated songwriter. His dusky voice lends an animate warmth to his already intimate songs, which are full of a poet's sense of image. Lines like, "Your footsteps are a stranger's but the night knows where you've been and the leaves

name **Canoofole** have the motto, "We make it up as we go!" Canoofole is the true spirit of improv, as I recently found out when I spoke with founder Curtis Settino. After playing music since his early adolescence and having been in bands with lyrics and conventional song structure, Settino became very interested in what he termed "spontaneous composition."

"About 12 years ago I started making experimental musical gatherings to see what was possible," revealed Settino. Over time that approach became Canoofole, which flourished when a steady lineup was found after years of effort. David Gilde, Abigail Grush, Jamie Walsh and Liam McNamara, multi-instrumentalists all who share duties on drums, bass, organ, clarinet, accordion and various percussive instruments, join Settino. Canoofole sets out cards on the tables at their venues, and asks the audience to write down ideas for what they want to hear. Then the band gives form to that suggestion through improvisational music and lyrics. It's a risky move that pays off.

how to think ahead, and it can be done."

Canoofole have recorded every single practice and performance and have preserved five or six. Settino listens to all the tapes and formulates feedback for the band to make them better next time they perform. They've compiled three collections of their best improvised material and will be selling one on their upcoming tour, which will take them through Northern California over the next couple of weeks. Canoofole will perform Friday at Sam Bond's.

A show I want to give you heads up for is planned for next Thursday, June 24. **Califone** will be

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are telling secrets to the wind," from "Falling" make this CD sparkle.

Mulvey can write about personal observations such as animals seen on a road at 2 am under a shining moon as he does on "Road to Mallow" as easily as he can write about the state of world economics. The track "29¢ Head" puts it bluntly: "Them shapes in bed are the senator and the C.E.O Which one is on top? Wouldn't we like to know ..."

Kitchen Radio is Mulvey's eighth release, and though he makes his home once again in Milwaukee, he spends most months on the road. He has just wrapped up production on a full-length DVD of his own interview and concert footage set to be released later this year.

A Portland threesome with the playful

"We write that song on the spot. Sometimes we powwow a little bit and sometimes we just start right into something and hope it works out," says Settino. Most often, the audience provides simply a song title, and it's up to the band to interpret it. If it's too vague, the band will ask for more information like what kind of musical mood is envisioned. Of course, all band members are well versed in groove, punk, pop, jazz, avant-garde and many traditional music forms.

While being asked to supply the theme might seem initially off-putting to an audience, they start to dig it after a while. After all, how often do you get to have a band play just what you want to hear? Settino admits that spontaneously composing lyrics is the hardest part, "because there's a lot more ways to fail, but there's tricks and you can learn

appearing at Sam Bond's Garage in Eugene, touring in support of their brand new CD *King Heron Blues*. This is the CD that will push them into the public eye, as so far they have flown slightly under the radar of most current music fans. Califone's Tim Rutili has said that for his entire life he had a recurring dream of a giant half-man, half-bird character. He stumbled across a historical note about the very same figure he had imagined: Upon Rome's siege of England, soldiers learned of a Druid god who struck fear into the hearts of the British, a heron king. The Romans, facing defeat, turned a soldier outfitted with stilts and a heron mask into the British camps. The British soldiers fled. This vision of a hitherto unknown historical reality strongly influenced Califone's latest release.

From fleeting images of wingbones to the bitter taste of deceit, King Heron Blues has a woozy, dreamlike feel throughout. The lyrics read like the fever dream of a man facing his last moments ("red foot cold floor you're the root you're the hanging tree you're Easter in the Philippines" from "Sisters Drunk on Each Other") and the music is rife with haunting slide guitar and piano. The band's studio approach on this was unique, most of the songs having been improvised or written immediately before recording. After a quick bout of recording, the raw tracks were "chopped up, mixed around and reassembled" into the complete CD. Despite the historical reference to Rome and Britain, the music feels swampy. It's deep, muddled and unhurried. Dark secrets lurk beneath the cryptic lyrics and unexpected sounds percolate up from the depths, leading to surprising toe-tapping, head-bobbing episodes. A highly recommended show. **EW**

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