

Rock and Reggae

WOW Hall fills the week with reggae, hip hop and rock.

What a week of great shows, all over town! First, reggae fans will rejoice to the tropical sounds of **Midnite**, a popular roots reggae band from St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. If you're looking for an inspiring, danceable way to bring in the weekend, check this band out, Friday, July 30 at WOW Hall. Brothers Vaughn (lead vocals, songwriter) and Ron Benjamin (keyboards, musical director) founded the band in 1989. They are joined by a strong rhythm section of drummer Dion Hopkins and bassist Phillip Merchant. The brothers have a strong musical vision and base their music on the foundation of "old-school roots sound matched with powerful lyrics that address various issues such as racial oppression, misrepresented social history and fundamental Rastafarian teachings."

Midnite keeps things fresh by never playing the same set twice and constantly working on new material to bring to its live performances. Midnite spends a considerable amount of time each year on St. Croix, in a stimulating community of people that nourish the musicians' musical and spiritual lives.

This Friday marks Midnite's third time in Eugene following sold-out shows at John Henry's and WOW Hall in past months. Eugene artists **Satya Yuga** (Sanskrit for "The Age of Truth") will warm up the crowd before Midnite takes the stage. Drummer Julian Fritz and vocalist Omkarananda spread consciousness and musical melody through a rootsy jazz fusion approach. Satya Yuga recently toured California to promote its debut album, *Wine of the Mystics*.

On Sunday, Aug. 1, the WOW Hall hosts a night of hip-hop with **Lifesavas**, **X-Clan Millennium Cypher**, **Diverse** and **Libretto**.

Vursatyl, Jumbo the Garbage Man and DJ Rev. Shines make up Lifesavas. MCs Vursatyl and Jumbo met playing basketball in Portland's city parks. As their friendship grew, so did their repertoire of raps and routines. The two MCs became known around Portland by playing last-minute shows as a duo, gaining the respect of promoters as two who could be counted on as, literally, "lifesavers."

With Rev. Shines on the turntables, the group has garnered much acclaim from fans and fellow musicians, including Blackalicious, co-owners of artist-owned San Francisco label Quannum Records. Blackalicious invited Vursatyl to tour the world as part of their live performances and Lifesavas recorded on the Quannum label shortly after. Brooklyn's X-Clan released two acclaimed albums, *To The East Blackward* and *Xodus*, before disbanding in the mid '90s. X-Clan's Brother J has joined up with members of the Dark Sun Riders have formed X-Clan Millennium Cypher, who are touring with a new album, *The Music, The Mission, The Cypher*.

Skip ahead a couple days and save your money for **The Supersuckers**, also at WOW Hall, on Tuesday, Aug. 3. Formed in Tucson, Ariz., in 1988, the boys quickly relocated to the nexus of rock music, Seattle, in

1989. That was a smart move, as the Suckers quickly gained in popularity. Starting with 1992's *The Smoke of Hell*, people started taking notice of this band led by punk-rock cowboy Eddie Spaghetti, a beer-guzzling cowboy hat and cowboy boot wearing noise-maker.

Combining Motorhead-ish big riffs, a strong garage rock sensibility and a hefty dose of alcohol-fueled humor, the Supersuckers always satisfy. Their tongue-in-cheek country record, 1997's *Must've Been High*, released on Sub Pop, is a humorous take on drunken nights, hungover mornings and country music clichés. Their last full length, *Motherfuckers Be Trippin'*, showcased the boys' energetic rock blended with a little touch of hillbilly hickishness. Recently, Eddie Spaghetti released a solo recorded titled *The Sauce*. The current tour, which the band is calling "The Big Show," is said to feature both rock and country facets of the band as well as Spaghetti's music from *The Sauce*.

Yet another show at WOW Hall you'll want to check out, on Wednesday, Aug. 4, is the **Kottonmouth Kings** with **OPM**, **Big**

B and **Strawman**. Kottonmouth Kings play hip-hop and punk and are touring in support of *Fire It Up*. Having released eight albums in as many years, the seven-man crew spreads awareness about legalizing marijuana and increasing personal freedom. Producer and MC Brad "Daddy" X founded the group in 1994. Since then, their popularity has spread largely through the underground; they've sold more than one million records and more than one million concert tickets for more than 1500 shows.

Los Angeles's OPM blends hip-hop with laid-back reggae rhythms. Kottonmouth Kings have their own label, Suburban Noize, which also released OPM's new CD, *For Them Asses*. The debut CD, *Menace to Sobriety*, also came out on Suburban.

The next night at WOW Hall is **Floater's** acoustic CD release party. What a great week of shows!

Two shows at Cozmic Pizza sound interesting. **E Muzeki** on Friday gathers Greek bouzouki, Gypsy violin, Flamenco guitar and Celtic fiddle to weave a lush tapestry of world music. Through a modern interpretation of these ancient musical forms, E Muzeki gives them all a satisfying new life, together and individually. Saturday entices with a night of Brazilian percussion with Eugene's **Samba Ja**, and Nigerian Afro-beat and Juju music with Portland's **Jujuba**. Samba Ja is a 30-member mobile percussion ensemble, playing the music of Brazil's streets. The infectious rhythms of Brazil's Carnival music will get you dancing!

Under the direction of founder and lead drummer Jake Pegg, Samba Ja recently celebrated its third birthday. Jujuba features Nojeem Lasisi from Igbo Ora in Nigeria. Lasisi learned the art of drumming from his father, himself a master drummer. Lasisi toured the world as a member of King Sunny Ade's group, **The African Beats**. He appeared with King Sunny Ade on the recordings *Seven Degrees North* and *Odu*.

At Sam Bond's on Aug. 2, witness **The Mae Shi**, performing songs from their new one, *Terrorbird*. If you like Deerhoof, The Ex, or The Monorchid, you might like The Mae Shi. Performing with them is Olympia's **The Punks**, featuring record label Kill Rock Stars founder Slim Moon. **EW**

The Supersuckers play WOW Hall August 3.



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