



Diamonds & Rust Redux

Iron & Wine's Sam Beam finds simple sublime.

Quitting his day job wasn't a hard decision for Sam Beam. "People started showing up at shows," says this quiet and unassuming father of two. Losing his low-salary job teaching cinematography at a film school in Miami where he lives wasn't a big loss either.

With a Grizzly Adams appearance, Beam makes tender, acoustic guitar-based music with an occasional banjo overdubbed for spice, centered on religious faith (or lack of it), love and loss. The music and message is folksy in a hushed, whispered way that sometimes borders on the too-precious. His earnestness and sincerity in conversation and in musical form reveals that he is blasé about stardom and much more comfortable as Sam Beam, the father and filmmaker. Sub Pop (yes, the label that broke Nirvana has definitely softened) released Iron & Wine's 2004 EP *Passing Afternoon* and will put out another six-song CD in February. Here are some excerpts from our conversation.

EW: What does the name Iron & Wine mean to you?

Sam Beam: I just thought it was an interesting coupling of words. A good contrast but at the same time ... I don't know.

Where do you get your inspiration as a songwriter?

Lots of different things. It's based on personal experience, or things I've read, or things people have told me. I could go song by song and tell you but generally, it's kind of a broad spectrum really.

Your music is quiet and understated. It's not "busy" at all.

Yeah, for the most part. I'm going to put out a record that's a bit more busy. It's still fairly simple, though. I like to take the simple things and make it as interesting as possible.

Tell me about the next record you have coming out, *Woman King*.

It's a little bit more playful. It's still very familiar. It's a little bit of an evolution. It's quite a bit more percussive, more playful in its instrumentation. It's quite a bit more, just different instruments. Electric guitar, stuff like that. **EW**

Basementalism

Venue brings art, rock to all.

Four UO art students. A basement. Music. This could only be a cool thing. Welcome to Stonehenge, Eugene's newest underground (literally and figuratively) hot spot.

Adam Zeek, 20, and his four roommates opened up the club in the basement of their Eugene house at 2841 Central Blvd. and hosted their first gig at the end of September. Since that first show, Zeek and his housemates, all full-time students, have always had the goal of "connecting with the community."

"It's a way of rubbing elbows and becoming friends with your neighbor," he says. "And just giving a place where people can go as an alternative to bars and feel totally safe and laid back and hopefully enjoy themselves and experience more accessible art and music."

Zeek, who's lived in Eugene just two years, gained experience by hosting community-centered shows at other basement venues in town. "When we moved into Stonehenge, it was the perfect place to do this kind of stuff," he says.

On Thursday, Dec. 9 Stonehenge will host Olympia-based **Kickball**, one-man band **Thanksgiving** from Portland, and Eugene's **Micah Sykes** and **Bad Sector**. Thanksgiving is "powerful amplified folk music." Sykes is a "bluesy, twangy, soulful guitarist," and Bad Sector is a collaborative group that dissects old Ataris, Gameboys and other electronic elements then rewires them to make dance music. "It's pushing the boundaries of music and technology and it's so wonderful to have somebody actually local doing this kind of groundbreaking stuff. Especially where you can go see it in a basement," Zeek offers with obvious enthusiasm.

He stresses that Stonehenge is all ages and alcohol free. Parking can be a problem so he suggests carpooling or better yet, riding your bike. Cover is a sliding scale, \$3- \$5 and the musicians get it all. Zeek says that it's important that the venue be affordable and accessible to all. "We want to encourage people from all walks of life to come out," he says. **EW**

Food for Change

Music making a difference

Rebekah Johnson of **Spun Honey** doesn't want to be one of those people who sits on the sidelines. She wants to make a difference and she's doing it the best way she knows how — by rocking out.

This Sunday, she'll perform at Cozmic Pizza from 6-11 pm with Hollis Ann Thompson, the second half of the duo that makes up the core of the Eugene-based band, Spun Honey. Joe Brutzman on guitar, Howard Sichel on bass and Pete "The Beat" Burger on drums will join them for a sweet treat: the rarely assembled, full Spun Honey ensemble.

"Looking back over the years, there have always been things that make us feel powerless and dejected," Johnson said. "But the fact that we can do something like this and make a difference for just one kid or just one family, it just shows you can make a difference."

The event, called **Pocket Full of Change**, is a fund-raiser for FOOD for Lane County and all you need to get in is some change; the more the better. For every \$1 they collect, five pounds of food will be distributed to hungry people in Lane County. That's a lot of fuller bellies, so show up for a great show and pony up. **EW**

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