

Unfadeable Style

DJ Dan-O-Mite pops off at the McDonald.

Oxblood red paint and gold-framed mirrors canvas every inch of wall space as star shaped disco lights dart between the floor and ceiling. The shiny black bar stretches seductively across a background of multi-colored glass bottles illuminated by a gigantic, gold-framed plasma screen television.

Stowed away in the far corner of the room, dressed in a velour, navy blue Lacoste sweater, a pair of pure white Adidas shell toes, and colorful striped golf slacks, DJ Dan-O-Mite's wiry 6-foot frame blends in perfectly with the posh decor of the McDonald Theatre Lounge.

His style is unfadeable.

At 37, Dan Lococo, continues to rock with the best as well as the youngest DJs Eugene has to offer. This Los Angeles native moved to Eugene 10 years ago, trading in the bustle of the big city for a relaxed family-friendly environment. "I wanted a simpler life," he says. "I want fresh water. I want fresh air. I don't want a busy town. I was

pretty much over the nightlife scene because I had been doing it for so long."

In his laid back Southern California surfer vocal inflection, Lococo explains how over the past 20 years, his approach to DJ-ing morphed from a dizzying social affair to a more relaxed hobby focused on creating moods. Although he admits his love of playing to ravenous, beat-hungry partiers, Lococo says he knows his days in front of hundreds at packed clubs is over. "My ego wants that again," he says. "I want to be able to play the right stuff and make the people dance and have everybody like what I'm doing. But it really is like more of a hobby now. It's kind of like I'm retiring."

With grace and wisdom, Lococo weaves an intimate, mature atmosphere from a smooth pulse of deep, soulful house, upbeat dancehall and old school hip hop. "I'm not really trying to make people dance," he says. "I'm just trying to create a good environment for people to chill, have a drink, and socialize."



DJ Dan-O-Mite and guests
McDonald Theatre Lounge, 9:30pm-2am
Friday 3/18 & 25 Free
www.mcdonaldtheatre.com

Hip hop's enlistment of the DJ as a musician, or someone who creates new sounds from old records, has slightly skewed the public's perception of the role of the DJ. Whereas some DJs scratch and cut-up beats and samples with their records and turntables, Lococo's focus is more on the record itself, the original song in its entirety and the mood it creates. Instead of scratching or beat juggling, he seamlessly blends songs of varying rhythms and tempos to energize or mellow the mood of the audience. "I gotta give those guys (turntablists) respect," he says. "The skills they have as far as manipulating

one sound with the cross fader and their hand is an art. The other spectrum of that is the beat mixing and playing songs the crowd wants to hear."

Although he incorporates a small amount of scratching over his selection of classic tunes, Lococo says his strength as far as DJ-ing is in the depth and variety of his crate, or record collection. He can flawlessly move from the joyful, innocent bump of Musical Youth's "Pass the Dutchie" to a sophisticated deep house groove. He'll mix in a little bit of A Tribe Called Quest with The Brand New Heavies.

He credits this style of DJ-ing to an older crew of DJs who mix hard-to-find, rare-groove, funk and soul tracks with newer, underground hip hop, dancehall and acid jazz. The always affable and generous Lococo often splits his sets with other old school local DJs including Tim Stubson, Hanif, Tekneek, Jeff Ray, and Eugene Chism.

Once in a while, you can catch Lococo sharing a set with the Brothers of Beat at Café Lucky Noodle on Saturdays. The Lounge at the McDonald Theatre also showcases DJ Dan-O-Mite several Fridays a month. You can always check the theater's online calendar for Dan-O-Mite's next appearance. **EW**

Gypsy Renaissance

Pearl Django's got it going on.

Some musical forms are like bell-bottoms and day-glo. They're popular. Then they're not. And decades later they enjoy a renaissance. But the people who still have a pair of embroidered, hip-hugger jeans with flared bottoms stashed away in the attic have moved on to more comfortable elastic waistbands. To the fresh-faced fashionistas, the style is new and cutting edge.

Django jazz is like that. On the heels of WWI and the roaring '20s, caught up in the whirlwind of Paris in the 1930s, a legend emerged from the cacophony of automobiles, airplanes and machines. Django Reinhardt cut a swath through the new world and carved an indelible place for himself at the top of guitar history. Playing with Stéphane Grappelli in the Quintette du Hot Club de France, his music continues to influence guitarists today, particularly musicians who improvise. Both Trey Anastasio (Phish) and Beck list Reinhardt as one of their major influences.

Born in Belgium and a member of the Sinti tribe of gypsies, Reinhardt was a rising star when his left hand was badly in-

Pearl Django
Luna, 8 pm
Saturday 3/19
\$14

jured in a fire. The perceived loss of one of the most promising guitarists to emerge from the gypsy culture was devastating to many – legend has it that people cried when they heard of the accident. But Reinhardt rehabilitated his partially paralyzed hand enough to continue playing.

Forced to develop a new style that accommodated his disability, Reinhardt is now considered the grandfather of django jazz – an upbeat, swingy, jazz-based style now enjoying a surge in popularity, both in Europe and in urban U.S. communities with strong jazz followings. It's especially popular in the Northwest, with a big scene in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco.

Seattle-based **Pearl Django** is one of bands leading the resurgence of django jazz. Listening to the lyrical melodies of "Nuages" (off their newest album *Under Paris Skies*), or the cascading, lightning-fast notes in "Zingarelli," or the lilting beat in "La Rive Gauche" it's easy to see why. The very style weeds out amateurs – the fast-paced tunes with zippy melodies and complex harmonies require a certain level of proficiency, skill and sophistication. It's hot music – funky and fun, both old and new at the same time.

"I'm an improvising violinist," said band member Michael Gray. "It allows me more room than bluegrass or old-time or rock. In its essence it is improvised music and harmonically, it's got a lot going on." – *Melissa Bears*

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