



Crooked Fingers, Delorean
WOW Hall, 9 pm
Monday, 4/18, \$10

No Studio Trickery

Crooked Fingers' Eric Bachmann lightens up.

When the Archers of Loaf called it quits, no one would have predicted that Eric Bachmann would take quite the direction he did with his follow-up, Crooked Fingers. In 2000, the first Crooked Fingers album arrived beautiful and whole, heartbroken and tired.

Bachmann's songs were like old-fashioned ballads, full of characters rusty but true, the kind of late-night visitors who keep you up at the kitchen table all night as the

wine-bottle rings multiply. Meandering melodies and guitars with a strange momentum turned buoyant when the strings came in. And none of it was the least bit like the Archers' twitchy, sometimes indecipherable college rock.

Dignity and Shame, the fourth Crooked Fingers full-length release, marks a turning point, a shift from the melancholy of previous albums. Bachmann's voice remains endearingly gruff, earning him numerous inex-

plicable comparisons to Neil Diamond. "I get compared to Bruce Springsteen and Leonard Cohen too," Bachmann says, on his cell phone in Chicago. "So which is it?" He's quick to add, "But I'm a huge fan, so it's an honor." But with the album's first lines, "Come on now and wrap your weary arms around the ones you love/ Hold tightly and don't ever let them go," Bachmann sets a new and cheerier tone. Simple, clear arrangements carry surprisingly wistful lyrics; Lara Meyerratken's sweet voice threaded throughout adds to the hopeful feel. A Latin influence lights up certain songs, in part the result of adolescent years in which Bachmann visited his mother in Puerto Rico and Guatemala.

Even the production on *Dignity* sounds shinier than other albums, but Bachmann's amazed by those who find it "too slick." "We recorded it in a shorter amount of time than I've ever recorded anything, and it's live. We all played at once, no studio trickery. We went with this guy [Martin Feveyer] who has a really nice studio, but we were only in for like six days," he explains. "I agree, it does sound more professional, but that's 'cause he knows what he's doing."

It's not just the production, though — Bachmann also knows what he's doing. His songs have a different confidence this time around, a feeling that's echoed as he says, "It's a weird thing to talk about a record because when you've made it, you've said everything you want to say." **EW**

Noisy, angry, rock cacophony

Unlikely team-up promises raucous night.

"There's all these mesh caps nowadays, but I've been wearing mesh caps my whole life!" Scott H. Biram said. "That's what my grandpa wore!" The blues-inspired, punk-rock-tainted, death-metal-ruined one-man-band was shuffling around his home in Austin, TX, arranging electronics in his new recording studio.

It's hard to say if he despises frat boys, or if it's just the neo-outlaw/ neo-country ego, but there's definitely some sense of resentment over their hostile takeover of trucker cap fashion. "It's kind of like frat kids getting tattoos or piercings in their eyebrows," he continues. When Biram was stinting with rock bands in his teens, all of that was still uncool. "They thought we were freaks 10 years ago."

Raised on a steady diet of old

These four Eugene lads are set to battle their namesake genre.

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