

Guitar Gods & Songwriting Stars

From jam jazz to slack key

Bill Frisell knows no boundaries. One of his sets might include music from Aaron Copland and Charles Ives to Thelonious Monk and Muddy Waters. After playing in high school rock bands, he discovered the straight-ahead jazz guitar wizardry of Wes Montgomery, then started experimenting with microtonality and technology (delay and reverb), and became the house guitarist with the innovative ECM label.

In downtown New York's 1980s avant garde scene, Frisell played with experimental jazzers like John Zorn and other big names including Pat Metheny, Dave Holland, Bono and Elvis Costello. But after moving to Seattle in the 1990s, Frisell began to explore other American musical styles — country, folk, rock, classical — and assembled them into a bewitching, melodic quilt of American sound that somehow sounds like no one but Frisell. And he's coming to the Shedd on May 24 in a classic jazz guitar-organ-drum trio format, featuring Sam Yahel and jazz's hottest young drummer, Brian Blade. This is a top recommendation for all fans of American music.

Frisell is one of a series of superb guitarists coming through town this month. Over the last 35 years **Leo Kottke** has forged his own ear-catching blend of acoustic blues, country and folk. He plays the McDonald Theatre on May 20.

For a dreamier acoustic guitar experience, try **Keola Beamer's** show at the Shedd on May 15. The latest in a centuries-long line of Hawaiian musical masters, Beamer helped instigate the revival of kī hō'alu or slack key guitar music in the 1970s and maintains the tradition via his teaching. His performances complement his lilting slack-key guitaristry with songs and storytelling that evoke the contemporary Hawaiian experience.

Slack key guitar also influenced Eugene's own **Paul Prince**, as did Zimbabwean mbira music and more. He'll be joined by some of his musical co-conspirators at Sam Bond's on May 22.

Ever since his first hit about fragrant road-kill, **Loudon Wainwright's** (the Shedd on May 20) suffered from the twin stigmas of being a critics' favorite and a musical comedian. True, he's probably the funniest and wryest great songwriter out there, and the critics still adore him, 35 years later. But he's also capable of writing some of the most poignant songs I've ever heard, like "Your Mother and I," in which a father tells his child about the parents'

Bill Frisell



down-on-their-luck characters. Despite more acclaim, his record label, noting that homeless people don't buy many records, dropped him. Since then, Case has become a modern troubador, which no doubt inspires him to write some of the best road songs ever.

Many jazz fans as well as jambanders might enjoy the **Kyle Hollingworth Band's** concert at the WOW Hall on Thursday, May 12. Though you can hear echoes of his other group, String Cheese Incident, his solo work's funky sound veers closer to acid jazz, along with other trace elements. And for some jazz that goes way beyond the mainstream, check out the return of tenor saxman **Ellery Eskelin** and keyboardist **Sylvie Courvoisier** at the Shedd on May 18. They've studied or played with Dave Liebman, Joe Lovano, Erik Friedlander, Dave Douglas, John Zorn and many other jazz and avant-stars.

Finally, the UO's spring season climaxes with the usual trove of musical treasures. Future Music Oregon's May 21 show features Louisiana composer **Stephen Beck's** "Sarahnade," based on sounds made by his baby daughter, "Strange Bugs Stranger" for trumpet, saxophone, and computer, and "Millennium Bugs" for mixed ensemble and computer.

At Beall Concert Hall on May 23, the **Oregon Percussion Ensemble** features the world premiere of "The Oregon Variations" by Los Angeles composer **David Johnson**, who'll perform on marimba, and the West Coast premiere of "La Chunga de la Jungla" by Mexican composer **Eugenio Toussaint**. The show also includes Steve Reich's mesmerizing "Six Marimbas," and works by Karlheinz Stockhausen and William L. Cahn. **EW**

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EDWIN MCCAIN
Maia Sharp & Marcus Eaton
Wednesday May 18 John Henry's
77 West Broadway • 6:30pm Doors • 21 and Over
Tickets At All TicketMaster Outlets • Charge By Phone 866-866-4502

MANHATTAN TRANSFER
Thursday May 26 McDonald Theater
1010 Willamette St • 7:00pm Doors • All Ages
Reserved Seating
Tickets At All Safeway/TicketsWest Outlets
Charge By Phone 800-992-8499

THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Village Green & AlterEGO
Thursday June 2 WOW Hall
291 West 8th • 7:00pm Doors • All Ages
Tickets At TicketMaster • Charge By Phone 866-866-4502

Kate Clinton
Thursday October 27 McDonald Theatre
1010 Willamette St • 7:00pm Doors • All Ages
Tickets At All Safeway/TicketsWest Outlets
Charge By Phone 800-992-8499

Lucinda Williams & John Doe
Tuesday June 21
4:00pm Doors • 6:00pm Show • All Ages

Indigo Girls & Girlyman
Friday July 15
4:00pm Doors • 6:00pm Show • All Ages

Michael Franti & Spearhead
Mofro & Toshi Reagon
Friday Sept 2
3:00pm Doors • 5:00pm Show • All Ages
Knuckle Down, the new album in stores January 25, 2005

88324 Vineyard Lane • Rain Or Shine • Tickets At TicketMaster • Charge By Phone 866-866-4502

Pabst Blue Ribbon

Velvet Trap
Having been together for 6 months with only their second gig coming this weekend, **Velvet Trap** has already been compared to L7 and Concrete Blonde. How ya like them apples! Ana, Carmen, Shelley, and Eunice make up this new powerful all female punk band. For information on where to see **Velvet Trap** this Saturday night check out *Eugene Weekly's* clubs grid.

PabstBlueRibbon.com