

Antibalas smote the GOP

KWVA's birthday bash

It's embarrassing to admit, but I've never attended an Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra concert. I have admired the group since 2001, when the legendary underground electronic music label Ninja Tune reissued the first Antibalas album *Liberation Afro Beat Vol. 1*. But apathetically, I always pass on the band when they roll through town, even after grumbling incessantly about the diverse array of talented bands (a league that definitely includes Antibalas) Portland sees that Eugene doesn't. The group includes such a mighty, progressive political dimension in their music, overlooking an Antibalas concert in favor of some familiar, banal comfort can truly be considered, as that annoying Air America ad defines, a symptom of "mannequinism." I am ashamed.

Through the politically charged spirit behind Afrobeat, the 13-member Brooklyn-based collective brings a globally conscious perspective to America's legacy of brutal imperialism, gross consumerism and all-around lack of empathy. Founded in the '60s by the great Nigerian musician and political activist Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Afrobeat linked the human inclination to dance with scathing

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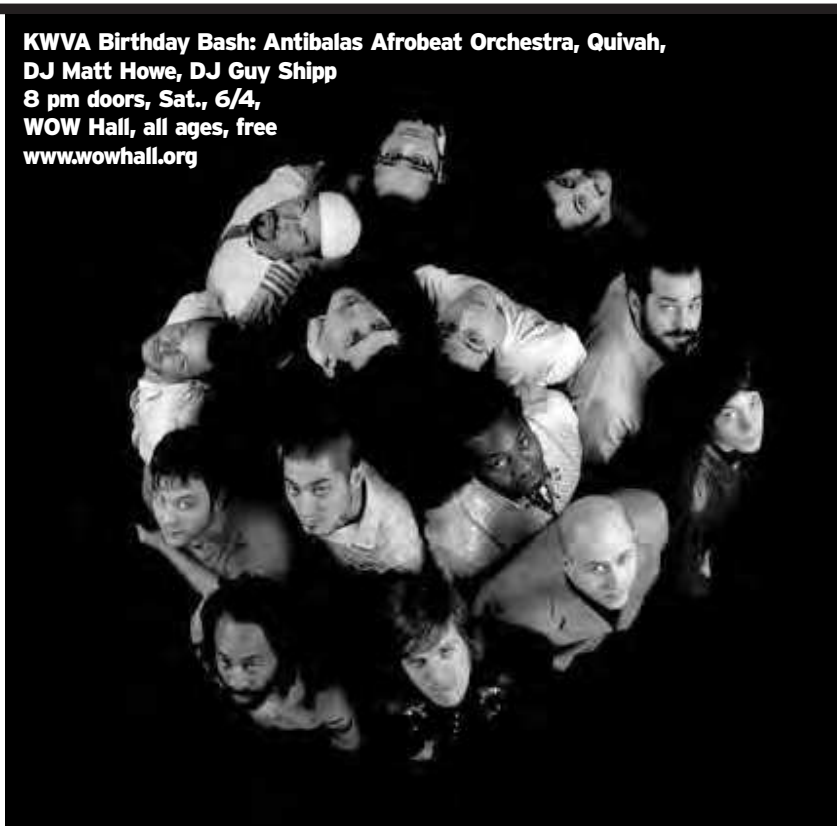
criticisms of the rampant injustice that was present in West Africa at the time. Inspired by Western jazz as well as West African high life music, Kuti built Afrobeat on a musical foundation of funk, improvisation and repetition. Antibalas further enriched the Afrobeat sound through an offering of Latin rhythms and Spanish lyrics.

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While giving homage to Fela Kuti on *Who is this America?*, Antibalas also triumphs where Kuti faltered. To put it lightly, Kuti was never heralded for his efforts to confront patriarchy. Antibalas, however, effectively tackles the issue of gender equity with "Sister," a tribute to the symbolic female that males rely on for strength and perspective.

I've never seen Antibalas live. But with the political climate we're currently steeped in, I'll definitely make it this time with fists pumping high. The band's upcoming stop at the WOW Hall is in celebration of KWVA's birthday.

KWVA Birthday Bash: Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra, Quivah, DJ Matt Howe, DJ Guy Shipp
8 pm doors, Sat., 6/4,
WOW Hall, all ages, free
www.wowhall.org



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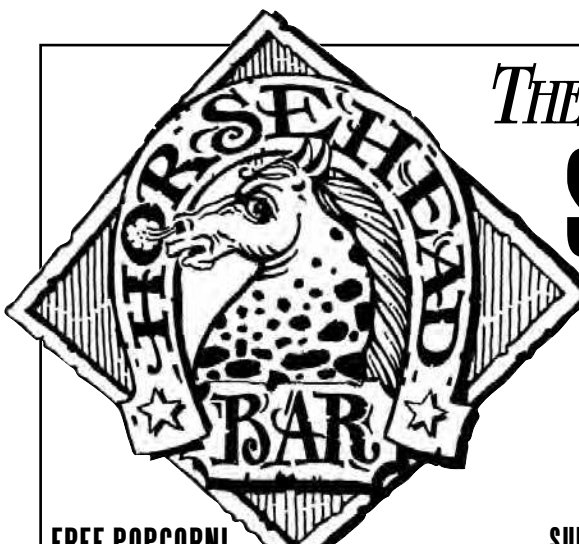
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