

The Hounds, Take Two



THE HOUNDS

9pm, Wednesday, 8/17

Platinum. 21+ show

738-6996

Back and funkier than ever.

BY ALANA YANKUS

Winners of the very first OSU Battle of the Bands, The Southtown Hounds have been reborn after a bit of a makeover as simply The Hounds and returned straight to the top of the Corvallis music scene. After three years as the original group, The Southtown Hounds bid farewell to the world in February of 2003, and almost exactly one year later, The Hounds made their debut, reinventing themselves for a new musical journey.

The band consists of Jefé Contreras (bass, vocals), Jordan Lucas (percussion and vocals), Rigel Woodside (drum, vocals), Curtis Monette (guitar) and Charlie Parker (keyboards and trombone). The five members' musical backgrounds are diverse. From 20 years of formal experience and Ph.D. work in computational musicology to learning from the flashing lights on a Casio keyboard, each one of them has traveled his own musical path to land at something they call Booglism (a term that reflects the unique and inventive attitude of the band).

Onstage, however, audience members are likely to see many more than the five official members of The Hounds. The group enjoys inviting guest musicians to jam with them at shows and has enjoyed a wide variety of their fellows' talents, from saxophonists to harpists (yes, a harpist in a funk band...you figure it out).

Rising quickly in popularity, like the first incarnation, the group took top honors at this year's fifth Battle of the Bands with their "Super Groovalistic Sophistafunktification," guaranteed to make anyone dance on the spot. The unique blend of funk, reggae, rock and soul is designed, according to the band, "for the express purpose of defeating...The Square, who wants to put everything in a box and sell it on the Internet for \$19.95." In the quest to defeat The Square, The Hounds have been touring the Pacific Northwest spreading their Sophistafunktification (warning, may cause partyphilia) to music lovers near and far. The band has also opened for larger acts that tour through the humble city of Corvallis, such as reggae group Natural Vibrations, setting the tone with their jam-band sound.

The Hounds spent much of the summer touring around the western United States, and will be grooving their way back to Oregon this week.

Rockin' for Everyman

The Wobblies stay punk and political on second CD.

BY ALANA YANKUS

A union such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is an odd place to find a band. But back in the early 20th century, the IWW used music for political expression, arguing for the rights of the common man through song, and was labeled with the slang term Wobblies. In 2002, a Corvallis-based political punk band adopted the name and the dogma of the IWW, using music to express the political views of the working class.

Brothers AJ and Ty, who wouldn't reveal their last names, moved from Springfield to Corvallis to attend OSU. AJ, the band's guitarist and lead singer, was spending a year in England and writing songs like mad, so he and Ty decided to form a band when he returned to Corvallis. During the time AJ was away, Ty met Portlander Charles, also an OSU student, and the two started playing together. Though other members have come and gone, the trio is the core of the band.

All three members are self-taught, though Ty jokes that it's punk rock and not too complicated. The group takes pride in their stripped-down simplicity. Their subject matter, the class perspective of the working man (dissatisfaction with government and the state of society, etc.), works well with this bare bones sound (more The Clash than Green Day), creating a sort of everyman's music.

They released their first CD in 2003 and hope to release their second one, *Flames of Discontent*, in the very near future as they begin a tour this month. *Flames* consists of 10 raw punk anthems for the average Joe. Throughout the new album, the beat is inconsistent and the lyrics are often unintelligible. If that doesn't bother you, then pick up a copy. If nothing else, it will make you think. The album paints a bleak picture of a world in which people are losing rights and falling victim to the gross corruption of those in power.

"Corporate Criminal" hits the heart of the matter with the lines, "I'm not a criminal, a millionaire is / I'm not a terrorist, the Pentagon is / I'm not a liar, but the President is / I'm not a traitor, but your leadership is." These opening four lines illustrate the theme and spirit of the entire album: Money corrupts, the government is corrupt, and the very people who are supposed to be helped and protected are being betrayed. The last line of "Swindle's Victim" emphasizes the theme of using the everyman as a pawn, a disposable piece. It claims, "You are the swindle's victim, you are the price / They pay to keep their dirty deals alive."



THE WOBBLIES

8 pm, Saturday, 8/20

AJ's in Corvallis, \$3

www.thewobblies.org

One song, "Lexington Rebels," compares the attitude of modern wars to that of the American Revolution. It goes so far as to claim that what today's patriots are fighting for is in exact opposition to what the patriots of the Revolution wanted. "Lack of compassion is the fashion of the day," the liner notes read. "The sons of liberty are turning in the grave."

Perhaps the most poignant song is "Half Mast." Short, but pointed, the song in its entirety is, "Over and over again, they steal our liberties and then they grin / Our freedom lies down in her shallow grave / When the wake is over we walk away and fly that flag at half mast." There's nothing quite like the accusation of killing freedom being screamed to the music in your local pub.

As do so many bands, The Wobblies want their music to speak for itself. Charged as it is with highly political and socially-aware content, the music definitely has a message for those who can pick it out of the enthusiastic screaming. "What we're trying to accomplish as a band," Ty says, "is for people to have fun at shows, but to leave them with something to think about and to hopefully stimulate conversation."