

Art Music

Clubs and concerts mix sound and vision.

We live, it's said, in a visual age. You know, video killed the radio star and all that. But when you can easily hear almost any music at home with only a few keystrokes, sometimes it takes more than watching musicians play their instruments to draw a crowd. That's why I welcome experiments in adding visual elements to music, as Luna is doing at 10 pm on Thursdays this month. And if you get there early, you can also hear a jazz jam featuring UO music students led by composer/pianist/professor Toby Koenigsberg.

Luna's first art and music concert features **The Ills**, a band from Oklahoma. It's hard to think of much of musical significance to emerge from that state. Let's see, there's Flaming Lips and, oh yeah, some

guy named Guthrie a long time ago. The Ills sound kinda like a jazz/electronica combo, except that acoustic instruments generate all their sounds. Elements of jazz, drum and bass, and funk along with occasional strange vocals will accompany the "interactive art" of **Emmanuelle Brochier**.

The next installment in Luna's art and music series happens the following Thursday, Oct. 13, when one of Eugene's most exciting bands, **Eleven Eyes**, provides the soundtrack to the art of **Dhira Lawrence**. If you haven't yet caught this hot ensemble's electrifying assemblage of jazz, funk, turntables, horns and keyboards, this is an excellent opportunity.

Yet another group that enhances music with visuals is **Kan'Nal**, a Boulder band

that includes psychedelic video by DJ Videolicious and a dance troupe. Their intense gypsy-inflected guitar sounds range toward metallic territory, driven by Afro-Caribbean rhythms on percussion, and fleshed out with didgeridoo and electronic samples. Catch them at Agate Hall on Oct. 6.

On Oct. 13, DIVA brings another difficult-to-describe duo, **English**, to town for some late-night strangeness. Trumpet/ electronics/"non-instrument" player Joe Foster played in various Portland bands until he moved a few years ago to South Korea, where he met flutist/performance artist Bonnie Jones, who was born there. Musical adventurers, check it out. **EW**



"Lucidity" by Dhira Lawrence

A Band Possessed

Damron and the SOB gang take on the establishment.

Maybe someone should tell the rednecks in Alabama who flock to hear **I Can Lick Any Sonofabitch In the House** that lead singer and primary songwriter Mike Damron thinks Bush is a criminal, admires Ani di Franco, thinks that Christianity is a "beautiful thing that's been shit on and bastardized," and whose dream is to someday be as good a songwriter as Bruce Springsteen. He just happens to exorcise his

personal demons with the fury and intensity of a possessed preacher and makes music that's an alternating mix of country, punk and rock.

If there's ever a case of "Don't judge a book by its cover" or a band by their too-long, un-media-friendly name, this is it. Damron himself points out that SOB "is not a handsome band." But in this case beauty isn't about looks, but about great music, which makes SOB pretty damn hot.

Their last CD, *Menace*, hits hard from the beginning with "Gone," an explosive song that rocks harder than the mosh pit that forms when they play it live. The third track, "A Good Day To Be a Bad Husband," is the highlight of the CD — with a soft, rollicking country lilt juxtaposed against lyrics that are at once cutting, incredibly bitter and funny. It's a brilliant piece of music that sweetly showcases Damron's (aka Mike D) gravelly rasp as he sings blithely about flowers and murder.

It's also an impressive piece of work for someone who's only been writing songs for about four years. At 41, you could say Damron is getting a relatively late start in the game of rock. "I couldn't get behind the music I was doing [for other people] any more," Damron said, talking by cell phone from Chicago. "It may take 10 years or more before I can write songs like I want. I want to be as good as Bruce Springsteen or Steve Earle, I won't say Bob Dylan because that's just ..." His sentence trailed off, then he added, "I want to get up to that level of competence."

He said most of the songs you'll hear on any SOB record are his own "personal bullshit." And he definitely shines a spotlight onto some nightmarishly dark faces that haunt his past. "You can't just tell people to get over things," he said. "When you come from a brutal past, alcoholism, you don't just get over it." It's the connection that makes all the difference for Damron, finding people who relate to the experience and do some of their own personal healing through his music. **EW**



I Can Lick Any Sonofabitch in the House, The Sawyer Family, The Koozies, Dry County Crooks
9 pm, Sat. 10/1
John Henry's, Free w/EC wristband

- Espresso
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