



All Aboard

Railroad Earth lays down tracks from coast to coast.

Railroad Earth grew out of an informal summer jam session in Northwest New Jersey. "Eight or nine people would show up and we'd grill some burgers, drink some beers, pick some," recalls violin player Tim Carbone. "In the fall, there were three or four of us still standing." Guitar player and soon-to-be lead singer Todd Sheaffer arrived one day, bringing along some original material that the group quickly translated into bluegrass. Everyone liked the result, and they decided to put a demo together. The music got into the right hands, ended up on the Internet and the next thing they knew, they were asked

to play the prestigious Telluride Bluegrass Festival in Colorado.

"We were like, 'alright, we're playing Telluride, I guess we gotta be a band,'" said

Carbone. "And then it was like, 'oh yeah, by the way, since you're playing Telluride, you probably should have an album.'"

Within a month, the group added six new songs to the five already on the demo, and in June 2001 they released "Black Bear Sessions" to widespread acclaim.

Since then, the band has appeared at Telluride two more times, released three more albums and continued a vigorous touring

**Railroad Earth
w/Hackensaw Boys**
9 pm • Sat. 1/14
WOW Hall • \$12

schedule that, come March, will take them all the way to Negril, Jamaica. They're also preparing for a "ski tour" with Billy Nershi of String Cheese Incident and his band, Honkeytonk Homeslice. Last time Railroad Earth came through Eugene, they opened up for fellow east-coasters moe. at the McDonald.

This time, they're playing the WOW Hall in support of their newest release, *Elko*, a double live CD recorded on tour this past spring. The band has attracted a loyal group of followers who, in true bluegrass spirit, refer to themselves as "Hobos." If you're not one already, here's your chance to be a Hobo for a night. **ew**

Tribal Techno Jam

STS9's computer-driven sound returns to Eugene.

Many jam bands' careers resemble their music: endless noodling on the same theme. Not Sound Tribe Sector 9. In the past few years, the Athens, Ga.-based art-music collective moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, began imbuing their jam-based grooves with funk, drum-and-bass, and other influences, added colorful visuals to their stage shows, and, for their first studio album in five years, 2005's *Artifact*, even changed the way they created music.

Sound Tribe Sector 9

8 pm • Thur. 1/19
McDonald Theatre
\$18 adv/\$20 dos

Inspired by the possibilities afforded by digital technology, the band built up their new compositions as "sound sculptures," layering samples from diverse sources including their own live shows and multiple guitar and keyboard parts. The result is their

most ambitious effort yet – but how to transfer those studio effects to the live performances they've always regarded as onstage conversations? Even the Beatles never quite figured out how to transfer their mid-'60s studio wizardry to a live setting – a major factor in their decision to cease touring after 1966.

But technology has changed a lot in 40 years. STS9's solution: Every member except the drummer wields an Apple Powerbook loaded with sound samples as well as their usual instruments onstage, offering the players many more options. Now the band members can infuse their live show with a diverse potpourri of sonic ingredients that allows them to maintain the album's rich textures while not sacrificing their electrifying spontaneity.

You can hear how it all comes together when the ever-evolving STS9 materializes at the McDonald Theatre on Thursday, Jan. 19. For more info, see Melissa Bearn's preview of their last show at www.eugeneweekly.com/2005/04/21/music.html#music5 and check out www.apple.com/pro/music/sts9.

– Brett Campbell



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