

The Folk Everything Man

Ashley Raines is songwriting flexibility personified.

Lately Eugene has become a hotspot of folk and bluegrass, with bands lighting up the bars downtown night after night. This isn't a fad with players who've popped up for 15 minutes of fame and will disappear just as quickly. The scene has been around for years, and Ashley Raines has paid his dues.

Raines can pick up just about any instrument and piece together a song right before your eyes. He also happens to have a rather nice singing voice. But the real core of his signature sound, especially on his most recent record, *Machine Kills*, comes from music that's made up of the bare essentials.

"With *Machine Kills*, it's simply electric guitar and drums," Raines says. "I wanted a sound that was easier to convey live, I wanted it stripped down. With the four previous albums, if I had gone on tour and wanted to convey exactly what was on them, I would have had to have 20 guys on stage."

The new album was indeed a whole new songwriting process for Raines. Primarily a lyrics-first writer, for *Machine Kills* Raines wrote the music first in the studio, and followed by writing words later to match the feel of the song. Departure from the norm was something that took time to adapt to, but it worked out far better for him in the end.

"I've always been a lyrical writer," he



Ashley Raines
10 pm • Fri. 6/2
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says. "It's actually very difficult to have words and then try and find the music to try and match the emotion that the words are conveying. Once I got into the stride of doing it the way I did *Machine Kills*, it got very, very easy. The music will direct me to the emotion that needs to be there for the words."

When it comes to folk music, being a jack-of-all-trades musician and lyricist like Raines is quite the gift. And for a town with a history of supporting its singer/songwriters, he's a perfect fit. **EW**

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