



Brazilian Music, No Foolin'

If all you think of when you think of Latin music is salsa, you've got another think coming. The seven members of Eugene's **Macaco Velho**, pronounced Ma-CA-ku VEL-yu, would like you to know that Brazil has a great wealth of musical traditions extending far beyond what most Americans know.

Macaco Velho is Brazilian Portuguese. It means, literally, old monkey, a wise soul not easily fooled. Heliane Ferreira Pinto, a Brazilian woman who moved to Eugene in 1997, sings in Portuguese and brings a friendly, warm presence to every performance. I spoke with members Jake Pegg and John Polese by phone recently. "It's really cool music," said Pegg. "It's got great instruments, great grooves, great rhythms, and it's a lot of fun to come and dance to this group!"

Everybody comes to a Macaco Velho show, said Polese. "There's people that come to listen to the music, there's Brazilians that come because it's Brazilian, and there's people that come because it's good dance music," he said.

Polese explained that Brazilian music shouldn't be lumped in with "Latin" styles, and Pegg said that trying to describe Brazilian music in a sentence or two is impossible. "There's lots of different kinds of music coming out of the many cultures that have been in that country," he said, but Macaco Velho is known for samba and *forró* (roughly

pronounced "fo-ho"), a rhythmic, percussion and accordion-based dance music from the country's dry northeast. The group has a wide variety of instruments and tries to pack as many of them on stage as they can. "We're at 20-some instruments and counting," Pegg said.

Macaco Velho play 9:30 pm Friday, June 30 at Sam Bond's. \$5.

— Vanessa Salvia

Better Red Than Dead

Though **The Red Elvises** have lived in Southern California for 16 years now, fans in Russia and Siberia know all about them, thanks to healthy bootleg tape trading. Vocalist Igor Yuzov spoke by phone from his home in L.A. He said the band just returned from a month-long Russian tour, and they were startled to

find that people there already knew the songs.

"They even sing along in English," Yuzov said. "They think we are an



Igor Yuzov
The Red Elvises

American band!" In fact, Yuzov is Russian and regularly visits his family in Siberia. It's that Russian connection and the band's commitment to delivering feel-good music that's helped them endure. There's no other band on Earth playing music quite like these guys, combining Russian schtick, rockabilly and surf rock with larger than life pompadours, inflatable guitars and a healthy love for that great American icon, Elvis.

Yuzov said he likes Eugene's crowds because they are "very laid back," and even though he said "I wouldn't call them very energetic," he did say crowds in Eugene are "fun people." That sounds like a challenge! How's about giving The Red Elvises some extra love at this show, so they can see just how energetic Eugene can be?

The Red Elvises play 7 pm Wednesday, July 5 at John Henry's. \$10.

—Vanessa Salvia

Not Your Average Cowboy

Aside from a brief stint in the early '90s as "Mr. Julia Roberts," Lyle Lovett is best known as an American singer/songwriter extraordinaire. The four-time Grammy winner brings his eclectic blend of country, rock, blues, swing and a splash of roof-raising gospel to Eugene this week.

Born in unincorporated Houston farmland in 1957, Lovett has gone on to become one of the most significant, enduring acts in his genre. But don't let the "country" label mislead you. His famously crooked smile and tightly buttoned collar give him the austere look of a southern preacher rather than a country music star. But with two decades, nine albums, two gold records and sales of more than \$4 million under his belt, his musical chops are undeniable.

Lovett is a true country renegade in the tradition of such innovators as Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Townes Van Zandt and more. Bold and original as they are simple and self-effacing, Lovett's songs are refreshingly genuine, often humorous, and expertly supported by A-list musicianship. His "Large Band" is a near-orchestral menagerie that has earned him con-



Lyle Lovett

siderable acclaim for his live shows.

After releasing three critically acclaimed albums — *Lyle Lovett* (1986), *Pontiac* (1987) and *And His Large Band* (1989) — Lovett departed from traditional country to explore a broader musical spectrum. The gold-certified *Joshua Judges Ruth* (1992), his most successful album to date, is infused with both gospel and R&B. 1996's gold-certified and Grammy-winning *The Road to Ensenada* marked his return to western swing, honky tonk, country and folk. His 1998 release, *Step Inside This House*, paid homage to Lovett's early Texas songwriting influences and was followed with his first live album, *Live in Texas*, a year later. In 2000, Lovett released the film soundtrack to Robert Altman's *Dr. T. & The Women*. Lovett's a master of many genres, and Eugeneans should enjoy his return to summer concerts at the Cuthbert.

Lyle Lovett plays 7 pm Thursday, July 6 at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. \$41.50 - \$73.50. — Martha Calhoun

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