

the Southern blues that I heard in folk music.”

Ryan’s newest CD, *13*, is a solo album — “me and the guitar,” he said — of half originals and half covers of songs he likes. It’s called *13* for a few reasons, “One, it has 13 takes on it,” he said. “I was born on Friday the 13th and always thought of it as a lucky number. And it’s an obscure reference to a calling card that Howlin’ Wolf had once upon a time.”

‘I started out as a folkie, got a guitar in my hands when I was 12 and was fortunate enough to find ways to stick with it.’

— Walker T. Ryan

Ryan is mostly known for his Delta blues but said that on *13*, the covers are a little more Chicago-style blues than he usually does. “I did a Jimmy Reed tune, ‘I Found True Love,’ and I always try and do a Lightnin’ Hopkins tune because he’s one of the principle influences I work from.”

Ryan moved to Eugene 19 years ago to be near his daughter, playing locally during that time, but giving up his extensive road touring. The CD was actually released in the spring, but Ryan is celebrating *13* now because he never held an official release party here in his hometown. He anticipates the release of another CD around Christmas. That one, *The High Desert Church of the Mojo Hand*, was recorded in Santa Fe by Kenny Passarelli, former bass player for Elton John and noted blues producer.

Ryan is enjoying some “marvelous” coverage for *13* in the current issue of a British magazine called *Blues Matters*. “It’s a seven page interview next to a seven page interview about Bonnie Raitt,” Ryan said. “It knocked me out!” *Blues Matters* raves about *13*, saying Ryan’s own compositions stand up alongside those by Lightnin’ Hopkins and Jimmy Reed and that he also offers “fresh and original” covers while retaining the “magic” of the originals.

Ryan will release *13* at Papa’s Soul Food Kitchen (newly moved to Whitaker), which specializes in BBQ and down-home Southern-style cooking. Papa’s has found a niche nurturing the acoustic blues scene. “This guy is amazing,” said Ryan about Papa. Walker’s release show also inaugurates Papa’s newly-expanded deck with a stage, a comfortable atmosphere to take in food, drink and music. “It’s a very nice scene they’re opening up there,” Ryan said. “It’s a good match, we’re both having a good time doing this!” Papa’s Soul Food Kitchen will host Ryan in an all ages dinner show with no cover, then later in the night drummer Tony Figoli will join Walker for “The Down in the Bottom Blues Dance and Ramble,” with special food offerings throughout the evening.

EW

A MILLION/BILLION REASONS TO GO

Why should you go see a Million/Billion show? “‘Cause we’re the best band in the world,” says guitarist and lead singer Gavin Bellour with all the tongue-in-cheek humility of a budding rock star. While critics haven’t gone quite that far, the L.A.-based trio could be the next big thing. Their eclectic blend of folksy indie rock, pop tempos and the occasional country-flavored twinge of harmonica caught the attention of *URB* magazine earlier this year, and their debut album, *Ready. Fire. Aim.*, got a four-star review. BMI also recently chose Million/Billion as their “Pick of the Month.”

Bellour says the band members’ diverse influences have merged to create a sound that is hard to define. “I think you could pretty much list any genre and it would fit in somewhere,” Bellour says. More important to Million/Billion than labels, however, is substance. “There’s no outfit you can’t dress a good song in, as long as you communicate and you reach people,” he says. The ambiguity hasn’t hindered the band’s success, as they have recently shared bills with such popular and widely divergent artists as Beck, Ray Lamontagne and Shooter Jennings. “The record is one thing,” says Bellour, “but there’s an energy that we bring to the stage that is really fun and really infectious. We’ve never had an audience be disappointed with us.”

Million/Billion plays at 7 pm Friday, July 21 at Cozmic Pizza. \$7. — Martha Calhoon

CENTERPIECE OF THE PUZZLE

When J.L. Stiles plays the blues, it really doesn’t matter if he’s onstage by himself with just a guitar and harmonica or rocking out louder with a full band. He projects all of his sounds with tenacity and the passion of the best of old American blues and jam music.

“The great thing about a solo act that I would incorporate is the element of one guitar and one voice can indicate so many different things in music,” says Stiles. “With a band, it’s more like fitting pieces together and actually making a sound. And that actually opens up more difficulties in the studio because it takes more time and commitment to get the sounds you want out onto the CD.”

Stiles brought together a full band for his latest release, *Land of the Plenty*, a much fuller and lyrically different album than his solo album, *Solo Sessions*. “This new album has a lot more of a political edge than the last one,” he says. “It’s like we’re living in the land of the plenty, but the album is like the fall of this land.”

J.L. Stiles plays with Grand Street and Rob and Darius at 9 pm Wednesday, July 26 at Sam Bond’s. \$3-\$5. — Dan Hoyt



J.L. Stiles

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

The Cops have a duty: To make classic punk fun again. Their sleek, smart approach to punk blends the message of The Clash in with the attitude of the Buzzcocks and the style of the Velvet Underground. It’s old and has been repeated by hundreds of bands over the past 30+ years, but these Seattle rockers make it fresh in a way most bands can’t.

“We want to write songs that are edgy, tough and gritty,” says guitarist/vocalist Mike Jaworski. “But we also want to write songs that make people want to dance, have sex and start a revolution all at the same time!”

In November of 2005, the band put out their full-length debut, *Get Good or Stay Bad*. The record is simple instrumentation combined with a bitter swagger at its finest. But on the band’s sophomore effort, Jaworski says, The Cops won’t be doing the same thing twice.

“We wanted to showcase that we’re a great live band with the first record, because it’s one of our strengths,” says Jaworski. “This next record will be a little different than straight punk rock. I mean, we still consider ourselves to be punk rock, but this next record will be a little bit messier.”

The Cops play with the Low Haunts at 10 pm Thursday, July 27 at Luckey’s. \$3.

— Dan Hoyt



The Cops

J.C. says:
‘This is one
of the finest
bands in the
country.’

J.C. Rico & the Zulu Dragons

You all should get off of your dead asses and join him for his birthday bash...

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