

Music Box Melodies

The delicate compositions of **Petracovich** (aka Jessica Peters) play like tiny, melodic secrets, whispers wrapped in bells, piano and ambient sounds. The one-woman band's second album, *We Are Wyoming*, is a collection of songs that hover in a particular space between ethereal and poppy, bordering on catchy but likely to stick in your head for their atmosphere as much as their melodies.

Peters calls her musical project Petracovich (an old family name) as a nod to her music-loving great-grandfather, who, at the turn of the century, would listen to the New York Opera on his radio, dressed in a suit out of respect for the music. The image seems to inspire the content of Peters' songs as well as her musical moniker: Titles like "Summer Trees," "Paper Cup" and "Swallows on 8th Street" come across like musical still-lives of a lone moment in time. On "What If I Came to Get You?" Peters' voice comes to the fore for a jaunty, snare-decorated track that wouldn't be out of place on an Aimee Mann record. Like Mann's, Peters' voice is both breathy and perfectly controlled, sinking into some songs and resting clearly atop others, like the moody, affecting "All I Have to Say." The trilling, 29-second "Fantasy Impromptu" (borrowed from Chopin) creates a lamplit mood for the following "The Ultrasound," during which Peters' drawn-out vocals dance with a piano that sounds as if it were recorded from a room away.

Peters plays live with two keyboards, bells, a laptop, her voice and often the accompaniment of a cellist, weaving dreamy, precision-crafted songs. Get in the mood at 9:30 pm Saturday, Sept. 2 at Sam Bond's. 21+ show. \$5. — *Molly Templeton*



ZACK JOHNSON

Love and Cookies

Bands with couples in them make me nervous. There are certainly success stories where the alchemy of love and music infuses albums with a magical energy that carries listeners along an intimate journey beyond even the artistic process of bandmates. Timbuk3 is my favorite example of a husband-wife act who wrote and harmonized about love and boredom with the same degree of wit and level of musical intensity. But my skeptical side is always somewhat wary of lovers who make music. It just seems like the potential is high for mistaking the grooviness they see in each other for actual grooviness the world will undoubtedly want to hear.

Casper and the Cookies was potentially a very worrying example as the female vocalist, Kay Stanton, was a recent addition to the established Athens power-pop band after falling in love with its founder, Jason NeSmith. Who knows how fellow members Jay Hicks and Davy Gibbs feel about backing up the chronicles of courtship between Stanton and NeSmith in their new album, *The Optimists Club*, but the result is lyrically entertaining enough to overcome a few cringe-inducing moments inevitable in such a love-heavy project.

The Optimists Club feels like an opera about love in the city (New York, in this case). Each song is distinct but captures a story or moment that dovetails with the other tracks in a way that compels you to really listen to the whole album rather than skip around to the catchiest tunes. Casper and the Cookies are known — by those who know them — for their creativity and unconventional musical styling, and this album delivers in both areas. If the wit and energy of *The Optimists Club* is any indication of how interesting their live show might be, fans of unabashedly quirky pop should find their way to this show.

Casper and the Cookies play with DoublePlusGood and The Ingredients at 10 pm Saturday, Sept. 2 at the Downtown Lounge. 21+ show. \$5. — *Adrienne van der Valk*

A Little Bit Country ...

When your father is Waylon Jennings, one of the original outlaws of country, it would seem to limit your ability to carve out a musical terrain of your own. What greater rebellion against outlaw values could a son make than falling into a life of dull conformity?

Not willing to go that far, **Shooter Jennings** took his rebellion to the wild frontier of Los Angeles, where he carved out a rock 'n' roll career with his band Stargunn. They did well for several years, but in 2003 Jennings grew tired of the phoniness of the L.A. scene and decided to get back to his country roots.

Unfortunately, his opinion of the country scene wasn't much better, an attitude best expressed in the title of his debut album *Put the 'O' Back in Country*. Mixing country with elements of Lynyrd Skynyrd, honky-tonk and Guns 'n' Roses, Jennings set out to bring an authentic sound back to a country scene he saw as being dominated by cowboy poseurs. His

latest CD, *Electric Rodeo*, continues that mission with several hard rocking tunes mixed with some nice ballads and tempered by a wry sense of humor.

Shooter Jennings and I Can Lick Any Sonofabitch in the House play at 8 pm Tuesday, Sept. 5 at the WOW Hall. \$13 adv., \$15 dos. — *John Ginn*

Spy-Movie Sultry

Ambient, sultry and electronic, **Bitter:Sweet's** seductive mid-tempo blend of Portishead with a splash of Suzanne Vega seems almost more suited to a New York City cocktail lounge too cool for you and me than Cozmic Pizza. This undeniable swankiness is confirmed by the appearance of two Bitter:Sweet tracks in the film *The Devil Wears Prada* as well as on the HBO mega-hit "Entourage." Yet Cozmic Pizza is exactly where Shana Halligan and Kiran Shahani will be bringing their experimental pop sound when the band stops in Eugene.

The Los Angeles duo's debut album, *The Mating Game*, is a highly programmed combination of slow, samba-like beats with sweeps of jazz-laden melodies, scratches and even the occasional harmonica. Halligan's sweet, moody vocals drift over it all like a late-summer breeze. *URB* magazine called the album "delicious!" and the group has garnered comparisons

Shooter Jennings



to Bebel Gilberto, Beth Orton, Zero 7, Serge Gainsbourg and Everything But the Girl.

Bitter:Sweet replicate their sultry-but-edgy electronica on stage with an array of live musicians that can include a harpist, a percussionist, a keyboard player, a guitarist, a bass guitarist, a DJ and a cellist. So go get a pizza and imagine yourself sipping an apple martini on a velvet couch in your favorite spy movie.

Bitter:Sweet plays at 9 pm Tuesday, Sept. 5 at Cozmic Pizza. \$10. — *Martha Calhoun*

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Roseland Theater
8 NW 6TH - PORTLAND
7:00PM DOORS
ALL AGES
TICKETS AT
TICKETMASTER
CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502
Ticketmaster

Datri Bean
Friday September 15
John Henry's
77 WEST BROADWAY - 8:00PM DOORS - 21 & OVER
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER
CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502
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LITTLE BIG TOWN
Monday September 18
McDonald Theater
1010 WILLAMETTE ST - 7:00 DOORS - ALL AGES
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TEDDY GEIGER
BILLY JOEL'S DAUGHTER
Alexa Ray Joel
Sun Sept 24
Aladdin Theater
3017 SE MILWAUKIE AVE - PORTLAND
7:00PM DOORS - ALL AGES
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ART BRUT
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The Spinto Band
Wed Oct 4 WOW Hall
291 WEST 8TH AVE - 7:00PM DOORS - ALL AGES
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MAT KEARNEY
Griffin House
Friday Oct 6
McDonald Theater
1010 WILLAMETTE ST
7:00PM DOORS - ALL AGES
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER
CHARGE BY PHONE 800-992-TIXX
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Greg Brown
Thurs Oct 19
McDonald Theater
1010 WILLAMETTE STREET
7:00 DOORS - ALL AGES
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RECKLESS KELLY
Ryehollow
Tuesday Oct 31 John Henry's
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DON AVON
FRANKENREITER
The White Buffalo
wowhall
Monday Oct 23
291 WEST 8TH AVE
7:00PM DOORS - ALL AGES
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER
CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502
ON SALE FRI 10:00AM
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That 1 Guy
Tuesday Nov 7 John Henry's
77 WEST BROADWAY - 8:00PM DOORS - 21 AND OVER
TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER - CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502
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Kathy Griffin - Saturday January 13 Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
1037 SW BROADWAY - PORTLAND - 7:00PM DOORS - ALL AGES - TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER - CHARGE BY PHONE 866-866-4502