



Beauty, Bittersweet

It's a little rough writing about a band when you have only an EP's worth of music to discuss. Not that Denver's **DeVotchKa** has only one EP; the band has three albums and a good chunk of the soundtrack to *Little Miss Sunshine* under their collective belts. I'm just deprived. But their most recent release, *Curse Your Little Heart*, is worth the many, many listens I've put it through over the last week. The six tracks are largely covers, including Siouxsie and the Banshees' "The Last Beat of My Heart," an ominous version of Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs" and the made-famous-by-Sinatra (unless you're a fan of the Robbie Williams/Nicole Kidman version) "Somethin' Stupid." But these sound nothing like the songs' better-known versions. DeVotchKa's core members play theremin, guitar, bouzouki, piano, trumpet, violin, accordion, sousaphone, double bass, glockenspiel and percussion – and probably other things as well. Their sound is a swirling mix of international folk, swoony cabaret and something you'd have to call rock because that's such a general term it covers nearly every-

thing else DeVotchKa does. There's a certain theatrical streak through the whole thing: Hope dances with loneliness, quirkiness sits neatly with beauty, and the resulting melancholy sings with urgency. "How It Ends" (listen to it at www.myspace.com/devotchkamusic), from *Sunshine* and the band's 2004 album, is a perfectly compelling track, repeatedly building with piano and strings and easing back with frontman Nick Urata's smooth, heartbroken vocals (reminiscent of one of 2004's critical darlings, Arcade Fire) until the two join for a bittersweet close so gorgeous it should appear on lovelorn mix CDs for years to come. DeVotchKa plays with Eric Bachmann (of Crooked Fingers) at 9 pm Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the WOW Hall. \$12 adv., \$14 door. – *Molly Templeton*

Watch the "Joy"

The **Eugene Symphony** has been offering up one big hit of the classical music world after another this year, and this fest-of-the-greats continues with one of the most recognizable pieces in the canon: Beethoven's Symphony

No. 9, from which comes the "Ode to Joy." I'm partial to the second movement of the symphony (it's superb for climbing Mount Pisgah, say), but *everyone* knows that "Ode to Joy" bit of the fourth movement (and if you don't, check out the clawhammer banjo version on YouTube). *EW* has sniffed out some exciting pieces of info for our readers. Fun fact number one: The "Ode to Joy" part is the official music of the European Union. Who knew? Fun fact number two: Friedrich Schiller, author of the prose used as lyrics by Beethoven, is about as famous as Shakespeare (just not in the U.S.).

The Eugene Symphony Chorus – 120 people, including UO students who are *staying after finals week is over*,

under the direction of Sharon Paul – will knock your socks off. Fun fact number two: You can leave your binocs at home, for the symphony is providing one of those rock-concert live video screens on each side of the stage. That's right: Watch the sweat dripping from conductor Giancarlo Guerrero's face! Watch the cheeks of the horn players grow red! Watch the singers' mouths contort around those unlauted vowels! Other attractions include the beauty of Bruckner's Psalm 150 and the Vaughan Williams Serenade to Music, which chorus director Sharon Paul explains "is a great contrast to the Schiller" because the lyrics come from *The Merchant of Venice*. Tickets start as low as the price of a week's worth of eggnog lattes (and don't worry: The video screens mean even the nosebleed seats have a view), so pony up the cash and relax into the huge, gorgeous music. The Eugene Symphony performs at 8 pm Saturday, Dec. 9 at the Hult Center. \$15-\$51. – *Suzi Steffen*



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