

music

ill-fated band Better Days. One of the major folk-blues artists of the 1960s and '70s, Muldaur, after a period of hard drinking and losing interest in the music business, has recently come back with a couple of critically acclaimed albums and live performances at venues as prestigious as Lincoln Center, the Getty Center and London's Royal Festival Hall. He plays at 8 pm Sunday, Feb. 25 at Luna. \$18.50 adv., \$20 door. — Ed Ward

Sucked In

I can't decide if I'm a sucker for **Josh Ritter**'s precision-crafted, alt-country, creepily timeless, sorta-folky singer-songwriter tunes in general, or just for this one song from his 2005 record *The Animal Years*. "Thin Blue Flame" is a nine-minute track, something I'd usually find totally unnecessary. But it's just so good, all gentle guitar and a build that take forever to reach a



Josh Ritter

strange and heartstring-plucking pinnacle. Ritter sounds a little like *Heartbreaker*-era Ryan Adams, a little like Springsteen (as NPR pointed out), but he also sounds oddly like his heart's never quite been broken, just cracked. At least at first. You get to track five, "Idaho," and you might be listening to a lonesome troubadour of another era, one who calls to mind a song or two from Billy Bragg and Wilco's Woody Guthrie-penned *Mermaid Avenue*. I still don't entirely trust anyone who actually refers to himself as "weird," but I can in pretty good conscience recommend giving Ritter a listen. Josh Ritter plays with Todd Snider at 8 pm Monday, Feb. 26 at the WOW Hall. \$15 adv., \$17 door. — Molly Templeton

Catchy Package

It sounds like a piece of band mythology, but there it is, in black and white on the press release: Twelve hours after moving to Seattle in 2003, one-man-band **Aqueduct** was opening for Modest Mouse. Whoa. OK. Was that the reason to move or the reason to stay? This piece of paper doesn't say.

Aqueduct — aka Oklahoman David Terry — is on tour (with a backing band) for his second full-length record, *Or Give Me*

Death, a mix of songs that wouldn't sound out of place at an '80s roller rink, lyrics borrowed from *The Princess Bride* ("As You Wish"), wistful piano tunes with a bite (largely from Terry's carefully not-too-pretty vocals) and '70s melodies trading space with the language of the 2000s ("People never change, bitch / Don't even try"). "Just the Way I Are" swoons with synthy strings but swaps them for horns for the chorus; "Wasted Energy" is a power ballad that can't decide which other genres it most wants to play with. You want to dance? Want to hold up your lighter and sway? You get it all in one package. And it's catchy, too. Aqueduct plays at 7 pm Tuesday, Feb. 27 at the Indigo District, a rare early all ages show. \$5. — Molly Templeton



Aqueduct

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Todd Snider and Josh Ritter

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