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## music

Will Bernard



### Out of the Shadows

Although he's released four CDs under his own name and that of his band, Motherbug, and is recognized as one of the best jazz guitarists of his generation, **Will Bernard** has mostly played second fiddle. For the past two decades, the 40-something Bay Area guitarist starred in ensembles led by Peter Apfelbaum, fellow guitar whiz Charlie Hunter (the great T.J. Kirk funk-jazz combo), Stanton Moore (whose eponymous trio featuring Bernard played the WOW Hall last year), Jai Uttal, Robert Walter and many other major players. It's about time Bernard's own funky guitaristry won wider recognition, and maybe his new album, *Party Hats*, and its associated tour will bring it to him.

Part of Bernard's identity crisis may be his easy versatility: He can say something interesting in a wide variety of bands and contexts, and he's active in at least three regular ensembles. One constant is funk; his childhood exposure to Sly Stone, Tower of Power and other East Bay funksters permeates his playing on the new album. But despite its title and the New Orleans grooves floating through it, the CD is a lot more than a party record, investigating sophisticated harmonic territory and varied moods – easygoing and pensive as well as joyful.

Even after all these years, Bernard still has to share the spotlight – at his own CD release party – with a co-headliner: Eugene's own Eleven Eyes. But that's just a bonus for local jazz fans, who get two great, forward looking jazz bands for the price of one. Will Bernard Band and Eleven Eyes perform at 9

pm Friday, April 20 at the WOW Hall. \$10 adv., \$12 door. – *Brett Campbell*

### The Rise of an Epidermally Composed Trio

New bands are a dime a dozen. Some come and go like so many bad jokes while others hit the ground running and make a musical mark instantaneously. Part of the allure of catching new acts is being there to see which bands are going to fail outright and which have the potential to become legitimate musical enterprises. **Made of Skin**, brand spanking new in rock and roll terms, seems to have the right dark talent and musical compatibility to not only survive but to thrive unblemished.

When their respective bands (Like Breathing, Outspent) dissolved in April of last year, it took about three seconds for Zachary Simpson and Justin Ray to join forces without losing a beat. With powerhouse drummer Richard Angermayer (The Amazing Flaming Panties! and Dismantled) behind them, Made of Skin first hit the stage last June. "We just clicked," says 26-year-old Ray. "So far we've been pretty fortunate. We seem to have a decent understanding of the direction we're heading towards. Since we all have different backgrounds, we've never set a genre or boundaries and have tried to keep artistic freedom throughout the development of our project."

"We really enjoy what we're doing," Ray says, "and I think it transfers to the crowd. We have a sound and songs that people can relate to, or so we've heard. We want to get our music out to everyone, especially the all-ages crowd. For us, music isn't something we like to do. It's something we need to do. It's expression. It's release. It's a lot of fun."

If Made of Skin's nine-song *Demo '07* is any indication, their first album will be a memorable one. With audibly identifiable influences ranging from Jimi Hendrix to The Cure to Skinny Puppy, Made of Skin sounds like the next big thing.

Made of Skin plays at 10 pm Friday, April 20 at the Samurai Duck. 21+ show. – *John Dooley*

### Better as a Jam Band

While some critics have raved about the indie-pop genius behind *Eisenhower*, **The Slip**'s latest album, my only praise is: They were better when they were a jam band. Everyone from *Harp* to *Rolling Stone* has gushed over the group's newfound balance between traditional song structures and their experimental musings – leaving behind their "jammy" history for a more easy-access indie rock aesthetic. But *Eisenhower* really makes me pine for The Slip of yore, when the group

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