

Minus the Bear



Indie Extravaganza!

Three days, four exceptional shows

It's a virtually unheard of week for a certain kind of music that I'd hesitate to fully slip into the "indie rock" category. Guitar-centric, evocative and often independent, perhaps; across the board within an aural spectrum — though even that may be painting with too broad a brush. But no matter how you color it, there are shows galore.

The big name is, of course, **The Decemberists**, recently referred to in *The New York Times* as the "Decembrists," an "emerging" band that plays Portland's Doug Fir Lounge, which is, by the way, a "dance club." Ahem. Last year, The Decemberists released the widely-acclaimed *The Crane Wife*; that was followed by this year's DVD release, *A Practical Handbook*. Sometimes esoteric but never needlessly cute, The Decemberists got a lot of press when guitarist (and former Eugenean) Chris Funk faced off with Stephen Colbert in a "Shred Off" which brought to an end the highly entertaining "Decemberists vs. Stephen Colbert" feud of ought-six. Expect less soloing and more catchy, literate, extraordinarily arranged songs at the band's second McDonald Theater show in the last couple of years. Opening for The Decemberists is **My Brightest Diamond**, the solo project of Shara Worden, who has also played with Sufjan Stevens. (9 pm Thursday, May 3, McDonald Theatre; \$18.50 adv., \$20 door.)

There is one bad thing about The Decemberists' show: It's the same night that **Explosions in the Sky** plays the WOW Hall. EITS, an instrumental band from Texas, appears to be a group consisting of four geniuses, at least if their astonishing, anthemic, aurally descriptive songs are anything to judge by. The band's newest release, *All of a Sudden I Miss Everyone*, is just under 44 minutes of what I want to call the opposite of silent film: This is the music to a story you have to make up yourself. It's intense and unusual, bright and dark, beautiful and loud, intricate and driving. EITS makes the music that defines a genre by its contradictions. (With Eluvium, 9 pm Thursday, May 3, WOW Hall; \$8 adv., \$10 door.)

For something a little more externally appreciable — by which I mean you can dance to it — catch **The Rapture**. This band of Brooklynites multiplied the attention they'd previously received with 2003's *Echoes*, which featured "Out of the Races and On to the Tracks," a yelping, exuberant song that insists listeners not stand still, as did the even more energetic "House of Jealous

Lovers." Their most recent album, *Pieces of the People We Love*, seemed to make a smaller splash upon its release last year, but the band is still creating catchy dance-rock that weaves a bridge from late-'90s/early-2000s angular guitar rock to '70s tunes and tones. Former lone lead singer Luke Jenner, who now shares the vocals with Mattie Safer, sounds less distressed than he used to, but he still carries two of *Pieces*' highlights: lead track "Don Gon Do It" and "Get Myself Into It," a spare, percussive, insistent song decorated with saxophone and laid out above one of rock's most danceable beats. (With Shiny Toy Guns, 8 pm Monday, April 30, WOW Hall; \$16 adv., \$18 door.)



Explosions in the Sky

Before all those shows is another chance to check out the evolving Indigo District space when **Minus the Bear**, **The Honorary Title** and **Chin Up Chin Up** play there Saturday night. Minus the Bear recently released a remix album, *Interpretationes del Oso*, that offers new versions of tracks from 2005's *Menos el Oso* by P.O.S., Dalek and others. They're scheduled to release a new record (with the slightly epic title *Planet of Ice*) this summer, so it's safe to guess that the Seattle quartet's show will involve some new tracks. I'll be crossing my fingers for "Absinthe Party at the Fly Honey Warehouse" from 2003's *Highly Refined Pirates*, which for me clarified the band's sound: dynamic, rhythmically involved, with sometimes spare guitar lines tied together by singer Jake Snider's versatile voice. Like the rest of these shows, this one — with its pair of also-enticing opening acts — shouldn't be missed. Extra bonus: They're all all-ages! (8 pm Saturday, April 28, Indigo District; \$14 adv., \$15 door.) **EW**

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