



Aphrodesia

Back to the Source

The great Nigerian Afro pop deity Fela Kuti may have danced off this mortal coil a decade ago, but his musical spirit regularly reincarnates in Eugene during frequent visits by his American musical descendants Antibalas and **Aphrodesia**. The latter, based in the San Francisco Bay area, adds reggae, funk, a dash of hip hop and South African mbira influences gleaned from lead singer Lara Maykovich's study in Zimbabwe. But West African polyrhythms remain the group's foundation, as evidenced by the strong positive response (from audiences as well as Fela's son Femi) Aphrodesia received when it took them back to the source in a tour of Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Ghana last year. Like Fela, who was persecuted and nearly killed by the government for his pro-democracy lyrics, Aphrodesia delivers progressive political messages deploring the current administration, exhorting environmentalism (they've been touring in a biodiesel fueled bus for years) and so on. But thanks to the boss horns, out-front bass lines, jazzy interlocking guitars and frenzied multiple percussion, you can always dance to the message.

Opening band Lunar Fire, an alter ego of Kan'Nal, adds rapping and other spoken words to its artsy neo-hippie rock. Aphrodesia and Lunar Fire perform at 9 pm Friday, July 27, at the WOW Hall. \$10 adv., \$12 door. — *Brett Campbell*

Play It, Sam

Imagine what would happen if someone gutted an old auto mechanic shop, leaving

the garage bay door intact. Rustic wooden tables and chairs would replace the hydraulic lifts. Beer would be served back-porch style out of sturdy Mason jars. Mounted longhorn steer horns would hang on the wall — enhancing the outlaw western décor — along with gears and other odd auto part scraps and locally made art. Someone would have the brilliant idea to serve gourmet organic vegetarian pizza, delicious salads, scrumptious desserts and Pabst Blue Ribbon.

This situation is far from hypothetical. For the past 13 years, **Sam Bond's Garage** has been hosting some of the best music in

town. The bands that grace the stage may not always be the most well known (The Flat Mountain Girls), but they're certainly often colorful (Yard Dogs Road Show) and sometimes controversial (Jewmongous). We've heard shining new voices (Devon Sproule) and seen familiar local faces (Norma Fraser). There's been psychobilly (Sawyer Family), reggae (I-chele and the Circle of Light) and singer-songwriters (Horse Feathers). There's no end to the variety of shows at Sam Bond's, from tons of local bands to political comedy, punk to folk. There's never enough space to dance, but somehow people always find room to cut a swath through the crowd.

It's difficult to imagine our local music scene without this gem of a venue. It's intimate, warm and friendly, a neighborhood place where you can feel totally comfortable stopping by to grub on pizza, grungy from work or dolled up for a night on the town. You can always count on seeing a familiar face in the crowd and getting up-close and personal with the performers. That is, if you're of legal drinking age.

Ah, Sam Bond's. We lift our jars to you!

The Sam Bond's Anniversary Show #13 with Tom Heini, Dan Jones and the Squids, Yeltsin and more takes place at 9 pm Saturday, July 28. 21+ show. \$1.

— *Vanessa Salvia*

Bleeding Metal Hearts

There is something to be said for wife-beaters, working-class men and drinking beer from a can — or at least that's what the guys from **Botox Party** and **Red Angel Dragnet** would like you to believe.

The two punk bands, both hailing from Richmond, Va., are deeply engrossed in the East Coast punk scene, a scene that is founded on do it yourself (DIY) ethics and bleeding metal hearts.

"The Richmond punk scene is very diverse. There are a lot of different punk bands playing a lot of different styles of punk," says Botox Party singer/guitarist Chuck (yes, just Chuck). "The Richmond scene in general has a huge DIY work ethic that keeps the scene functioning and never coming to a complete halt."

The two bands share not only a devotion for all that is punk but a bass player, Dangerous Danny Dillenger, too. Despite their similarities and obvious camaraderie, the bands have very different dynamics. Red Angel has more of a Southern rock influence mixed with old school '80s punk, and Botox Party is an eclectic mix of all styles of punk rock.

"The spirit of the two bands is pretty much the same. Everybody is just as passionate as the other person. Some of the lyrical content is different between the two bands, but it all comes from the same place. I love

Girlfriend Troubles

The San Francisco-based band **The Girlfriend Experience** is a newcomer to the world of rock music. Their first full-length album, *When In Rome ... Do As The Lions*, is just shy of being one year old. Like many fledgling rock bands, their desire to accelerate from unknown bar band to full-blown stadium rockers comes through in all 13 tracks of their album.

The band — Tobias Hawkins, Ty C. Gerhardt, Dave Kirk and James Maize — enlisted production and engineering guru Sylvia Massy to give their album a certain edge. While she's credited for her work with Tool and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, one can't help but feel these influences on *When In Rome...* where they're not needed. The band's bio dismisses the use of just one label, calling themselves part pop, stoner and psychedelic rock. But while the band moves through tracks, recalling The Cure, Jawbreaker and The Pixies as they go, they seem most comfortable in pop rock. A song like "Cross the Eyes" works because The Girlfriend Experience is good at producing that heavy, anthemic guitar sound. But when they stray, it feels uncomfortable. The title track begins with the line "Life's unfair." This instantly calls to mind spoiled teenagers with self-created angst. The rest of the track uses that talk-singing, storytelling rhythm that Frank Black used on "Monkey Gone To Heaven." Again, it's great when The Pixies do it; not so much when The Girlfriend Experience does.

While this all sounds pretty negative, like a confused teenager, the band just needs some time to figure itself out. If they stick to danceable, pop tracks with just a hint of rock attitude, they'll do just fine. The Girlfriend Experience plays at 10 pm Wednesday, Aug. 1, at Luckey's. 21+ show. \$3-\$5. — *Amanda Burhop*



The Girlfriend Experience

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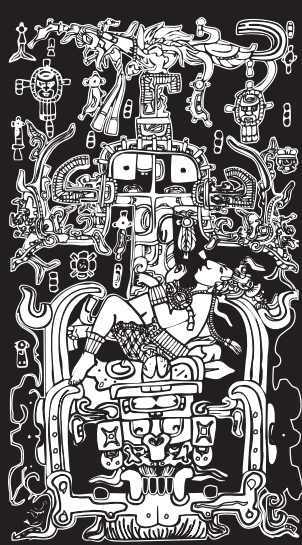
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