



All Sounds Considered

As with most musical first encounters, I stumbled upon **Ozomatli** by chance. At the Sasquatch Music Festival last May, the first act to really pique my interest, or at least make me feel, um, *festive*, was this nine piece explosion from Los Angeles. Like a domestic version of Manu Chao and Radio Bemba Sound System, Ozomatli has an energy that's instantly infectious. It helps that they learned their chops working crowds of picketers, protestors and marchers.

Formed in 1995 as an impromptu rally band, Ozomatli brings together a rich fusion of source material and influences. In a recent interview on NPR, band members described rolling down their windows along Sunset Boulevard and hearing "all the music that comes out of each and every different car, whether it's salsa, cumbia, merengue, or hip hop, funk or whatever, it's that crazy blend that's [the sound of] Ozomatli." It's fitting the band has more press clips from NPR than music mags like *Spin* or *Rolling Stone* – such is their under-the-radar, globetrotting style of music that includes a healthy horn section and a host of guest vocalists (singing in English or Spanish as the mood suits).

And their latest album, this year's *Don't Mess With The Dragon*, was their first produced in a collaborative, all-hands-on-deck process. The result is a more holistic album chock full of endlessly catchy, danceable tracks like their current hit "Can't Stop." It's slightly stupid Ozomatli isn't headlining Friday's show; here's hoping they return for a full set sooner than G. Love can book up the McDonald all for himself. Ozomatli opens for G. Love & Special Sauce and Slightly Stoopid at 6 pm Friday, Aug. 10, at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. \$30 adv., \$35 door. – *Chuck Adams*

Like the Phoenix

Popular local band Deke Falcon just faded away. "[Drummer] Jordan [Glenn] went to drummer school, [bassist] Dave [Clark] went to art school, the rest of us got real jobs or something," says **Patrick Hayden**, Deke Falcon's singer and song-writer. After the breakup, Hayden played guitar with Dan Jones and the Squids for a year and a half, but the ghost of Deke Falcon wouldn't rest.

"Towards the end of Deke Falcon I began to write a bunch of songs on the acoustic guitar," Hayden says. "I write all my stuff on acoustic guitar, but there were songs that I didn't feel like translating to the electric context." So he started playing solo gigs.

Hayden's friends liked this music so much that they chipped in to purchase studio time for him. "But that was two years ago, and it took me two years of playing these songs out at really obscure places ... to feel like I was ready," he says. He recently wrapped up recording, and plans to release the material in early 2008.

For Deke fans, this music is a "missing link" between the CD that Deke recorded early in their run as a band and what Hayden is doing today. Now, Hayden is again joined by Glenn on drums and percussion and Dave Snider (Testface) on guitar, bass and banjo.



Hayden plans a return to the electric guitar with Raenie Kane on drums. As a doctoral student, Hayden's time for music is limited to rare occasions, so don't miss out. Patrick Hayden opens for Mood Area 52 at 9:30 pm Friday, Aug. 10, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+ show. \$5 – *Vanessa Salvia*

Ethereality

From the first rich, glowing notes of **Arms and Sleepers'** debut EP *Bliss Was It In That Dawn to Be Alive*, you might feel like you are listening to the soundtrack of a movie you would probably really enjoy if it had ever been made. Most of the EP's seven tracks flow into one another, creating the impression of one ambient composition divided into parts only to appease the requirements of the music industry. While the absence of lyrics may at first seem to relegate *Bliss* to the category of "background music," a few in-depth listening sessions reveal a complexity and subtlety that makes Arms and Sleepers' work comparable to a slowed-down version of a Philip Glass composition set to a more modern backbeat. Live shows are accompanied by a visual component provided by artistic collaborator Dado Ramadani.

The Boston-based duo (Max Lewis and Mirza Ramic) provides the following explanation for the manner in which their musical partnership began:

Arms and Sleepers is a project started in the back of an ambulance. In an alley way a man was bleeding with a cassette player in hand. What sounded like recordings of a gospel choir blared from the tin speaker. Down the street, a jazz band could be heard. The man was dying. He dropped the cassette player on the cement and closed his eyes, the sound carrying through the air into his ears for one last time. Though this moment in

time died with him, his cassette lived on, and Arms and Sleepers were born.

Whether there is any truth to this grim little story makes no difference once you hear the album. Arms and Sleepers' music is about evoking stories from the subtle disintegration and regenerations of life, capturing fleeting moments when humanity reaches a crescendo but there's no one there to witness it. Recommended to fans of Portishead, Sixtoo and Ulrich Schnauss, Arms and Sleepers appears at 10 pm Saturday, Aug. 11, at Diablo's Downtown Lounge. – *Adrienne van der Valk*

Punk With a Smile

Everywhere you look, musicians – if you can call them that – are having identity crises. Britney Spears is going through a Sinead O'Connor phase, Paris Hilton actually believes she is a singer, Beyonce Knowles thinks she can act and Lil' Kim can't figure out what face she wants to have today. Whether you blame it on fame, rap music or quaaludes, some performers clearly let stardom go to their heads. But somehow a little band from Wichita Falls, Texas, has not only managed to stay grounded despite its fame, but has maintained a clear identity: four guys playing pop punk hits for tweens. And boy, do they love it.



In the same spirit as The Bloodhound Gang and Blink-182, **Bowling for Soup** sings comedic pop punk, with much more pop than punk. Though best known for the catchy hits "Girl All the Bad Guys Want" and "1985," BFS has been churning out sadistically sarcastic albums since 1994. On their first album, the band kept it simple with songs like "Slurpee," "Crayon" and "Monopoly." They aimed below the belt in their next few albums with "I Hate McDonalds," "The Bitch Song" and "Navy Sex Offender." But it wasn't until 2003 that the band got the recognition that thousands of 12-year-old girls in braces have long known they deserve – a Grammy nomination in the pop category for "Girl All the Bad Guys Want."

The thought of these four guys in their 30s singing through their Joker-sized smiles to crowds of prepubescents gives me the same creeped-out feeling I get when I see clowns or Gallagher. But cornering the youth market is what Bowling For Soup does best; the band's songs have been featured in *Scooby Doo*, *Sky High* and *Freaky Friday*.

The only time the band "acts their age" is when the guys are covering well known '80s songs "I Melt With You," "I Ran" and "Ghostbusters." Don't get me wrong – I'm a huge fan of punk covers, but all I ask is please don't change the lyrics to my favorite songs to sell products or market to certain audiences . FYI, Bowling For Soup, the lyrics to "I Melt With You" are "Making love to you was never second best," not "Being friends with you was never second best."

Bowling For Soup, Melee and Army of Freshmen play at 7:30 pm Wednesday, Aug. 15, at the WOW Hall. \$15 adv., \$17 door. – *Deanna Uutela*

Intimate Sweetness

In this era of musicians attempting to revive a new wave, rock 'n' roll sound, artists exist who are still loyal to the folk pop of the late 1990s. **Rachael Sage** is an East Village artist who is not afraid to relish in a Lilith Fair past (she did perform at it as well). Let's just say it would not be hard to imagine one of her songs featured on the season finale of *Dawson's Creek*.

Her latest effort, the self-produced album *Blistering Sun*, delves into her Jewish heritage, tiramisu, individuality, love, Tom Petty and perseverance. The songwriter's voice harbors influences from famous female vocalists including Sarah McLachlan, (a tame) Tori Amos, Paula Cole, Vanessa Carlton and Suzanne Vega.

The self-taught pianist's 15-track album is mellow and sensitive. Sage is not afraid to open up to her listeners with intimate lyrics; however, she does not seem to explore what her voice can do beyond its sweet demeanor. Perhaps the most experimental song on the entire album, "Hit Song," with its energetic trumpets and jazz infused drums, sounds fitting for her upcoming show. "Paperplane" showcases her piano driven melodies, and on "Featherwoman" Sage celebrates determination with lyrics like "What are the things that I do best that nobody else can do?" Maybe you will have to see her show to find out.

Rachael Sage and the Sequins play at 8:30 pm Sunday, August 12, at Luna. \$6. – *Katie Cornell*

