



Brooks Robertson

**Fingerlickin'**

Eugene's got a knack for churning out adolescent guitar players like your great-great grandmaw churned butter, but thankfully 17-year-old guitarist **Brooks Robertson** isn't using his talents to join the third wave of bad Pink Floyd cover artists. At the tender age of 12, Robertson and his father witnessed a performance by finger-picking guitar master Buster B. Jones at the nearby Nokie Edwards Festival – and Robertson found his musical calling. Forswearing picks forever, he dedicated his guitar career to the intricate art of fingerstyle gee-tar.

Soon after, a string of serendipitous events found Buster B. Jones back in Eugene, recovering from a serious stomach condition that forced him to cancel his tour dates. Robertson saw his chance. While Jones recovered in Slug City, he schooled Robertson in the art of fingerpicking. Months later, they performed together at the Nokie Edwards Festival, kicking off Robertson's career and earning the lad sponsorship from Godin guitars. Now, after five years of both local and international performances, Robertson will release his first, locally produced album, *American Fingerstyle*, on August 25.

From the boxcar-hopping ragtime tunes to the soulful acoustic ballads, *American Fingerstyle* would fall right into place in the filmed version of *Little House on the Prairie*. Which may be why Robertson won *A Prairie Home Companion's* national teen talent contest, "Talent Between Twelve and Twenty," in 2004: because for all its ragtime charm, for all its versatility and genre-hopping, *American Fingerstyle* would be most at home in the only honky-tonk for 70 miles around. You might say that Buster B. Jones learned this young'un well.

Brooks Robertson performs at 5 pm Saturday, August 25, at Hinman Vineyards. Free. – *Sara Brickner*

**Pop Punk Junkies**

It feels like yesterday that I was walking down to the local concert hall with my friends to see bands like The Locals and Locale A.M. play a sold-out suburbia punk show (please feel free to laugh now). However, it wasn't like these bands didn't have street cred; they knew who their audience was: underage and



Bipolar Star

desperately seeking cool in yuppieville. **Bipolar Star** conjures up those nostalgic yet painfully awkward memories of being 15. Reminiscent of the band Size 14 (whose songs included "Claire Danes Poster" and "Death Metal Steve"), Bipolar Star is pop (punk) culture junkie music.

The Seattle quartet is finishing off the summer and welcoming the fall by traveling through Oregon and Washington to promote their independent, self-titled CD debut. Classically trained vocalist and frontman Rob Allison is backed by Keefe O'Neill on guitar, Frans Laulainen on drums and Tim Cherry's assertive guitar and harmonies. The album ranges from energetic, hard, to the point rock 'n' roll to teeny bopper punk tunes that could have aired on *TRL* back in '99. "Hearts on Fire" pays homage to Duran Duran with its chorus: "Hearts on fire, burning in flames like its some '80s video / We strut on the line, discord and rhyme" – followed with the melodies of "Hungry Like a Wolf." In the same song, Bipolar Star shows some Seattle pride with a line about Kurt Cobain and slams on the hipsters and their scene. On the other end of the spectrum is "Pogo," which sounds more like punk rock with hard guitar riffs and fast drumming. Just don't expect the Sex Pistols.

Bipolar Star celebrates the release of their new album with two Eugene shows this Saturday, Aug. 25: Catch a free, all-ages show at noon at CD World, then head out to the Wetlands at 10 pm for a 21+ show with The Lifters. \$5. – *Katie Cornell*

**Chaos U.S.**

With songs written by recovering addicts and ex-cons, you might expect some serious subject matter. **Internal Chaos** does delve into the dark side of man's struggles with his inner demons, but ... then ... there's the other side of Internal Chaos. The cuss word slinging, deliberately offensive side with song titles like "Fecalphiliac," "Poopworm" and "F.O.A.D." (Fuck Off And Die), an anthem the likes of which any good punk band should have. "I've always written songs about mental illness, and my past being in prison and shooting drugs, and stabblings," says singer Jesse Chaos (all five band members share the punk rock last name Chaos). "I've been stabbed many times. So Internal Chaos is about your mind, the shit that goes on inside." Drug addiction is a major theme, as all original members of Internal Chaos were in recovery and three still are.

Jesse drummed for Captain Punk Rock before they split up roughly three years ago, and it was as much fun to watch him drum as anything else the band was doing. He has handed off drum duties to Gordo Chaos, a seasoned drummer whose first band was the local favorite Compost in the early '90s. Internal Chaos recently recorded two songs for a compilation on War Dog Records, "F.O.A.D." and "Gutter Punk Rock and Roll." Only F.O.A.D made it onto the comp, but the band plans to continue recording.

All Internal Chaos songs are fast, raw, to the point and a bit gargle-y. "There's a touch of the Meatmen," says Gordo. "Jesse's got a real II Duce [Mentors] sound to him, and like Raw Power. It's extremely fast."

Internal Chaos will be performing with hardcore political punk band MDC, who will be performing two shows in one day, including an all-ages coffee house gig.

MDC, Instant Asshole, Lunacy, Pirate Radio and Leper play at 5 pm Wednesday, Aug. 29, at Wandering Goat Coffee House; MDC, 19 Limbs, Instant Asshole and Internal Chaos play at 9 pm Wednesday, Aug. 29, at Samurai Duck. 21+ show. – *Vanessa Salvia*

**Sacred Longing**

Portland expat **Adam Sweeney** is blessed, and not just with his tentative religious references. The man's got an impeccable folkie lineup. First of all, Dave Chalfant – husband of Katryna Nields and well-worshipped producer of Erin McKeown, The Nields, Beth Amsel and a host of other East Coast folk staples – agreed to engineer Sweeney's new album, *Technicolor Halo*. And just as his first album – 2004's *Places and Names* – reflected his years on the West Coast (with backup singing from Anne Weiss and Bryan Free and accordion from the Decemberists' Henny Conlee), the now-Northampton, Mass.-based Sweeney's second project features the musicians of his new hometown in the Pioneer Valley. Dave Hower, drummer for the Winterpills, Anand Nayak of Daisy Mayhem and Portland transplant Tracy Grammer all perform on the new album.

Northampton produces specific vibes with its long winter; singer-songwriters from Dar Williams to Chris Pureka have called it home, and the contemplative feel of those far-below-freezing nights comes out in Sweeney's songs. "You find yourself ascending those never-ending memories," he sings in "St. Peter," a sentiment that couldn't be more true in the deeply dark midwinter (or the superbly icky mud season). "With coffee, it's just tired and anxious; with whisky, it's just tired and sad," he says in "Fault Lines." But all is not lost: The spare guitar of "Heading South" will sound familiar to any longtime folkie fan, and lord knows survivors of February need to head on down to the sun.

Sweeney's voice, thin and a bit nasal, doesn't attract a lot of attention. But the wary resolution of the tunes, the determined conflict and recovery of wry and sweet lyrics foretell a smart evening for those who wish the East Coasties traveled here a bit more often – even if they're actually transplanted from the Pacific Northwest. Ashleigh Flynn, a singer-songwriter from Kentucky, opens for him when he plays at 8:30 pm Thursday, Aug. 30, at Luna. 21+ show. \$7. – *Suzi Steffen*

Adam Sweeney



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