



## The Lion Roars Again

Afro pop master Thomas Mapfumo plays the WOW Hall

Many Eugeneans probably don't realize that one of the world's most revered musicians resides, at least part time, in our town. In 2000, the government of Zimbabwe's dictator Robert Mugabe, frightened by the popularity of **Thomas Mapfumo's** anti-corruption, anti-tyranny songs, cracked down on Zimbabwe's greatest musician, banning his records and threatening and harassing him and his band. A hero of the former Rhodesia's rebellion against minority white rule in the 1970s, Mapfumo, known as the Lion of Zimbabwe, eventually moved his family here and made Eugene his base of operations. Now, the same songs that metaphorically deplored colonialist oppression apply to Mugabe's corrupt rule, which has driven one of Africa's richest nations into poverty and despair. Meanwhile, Mapfumo has continued creating some of the world's grooviest music, blending the upbeat mbira-based music of his Shona people with American R&B (he started in an early-'60s cover band that played music by his heroes like Otis Redding), reggae and, more recently, other pan-African sounds. Mapfumo hasn't allowed the turmoil of politics to restrain his restless creativity or idealism; he's been dedicating recent concerts to AIDS awareness and fighting Zimbabwean poverty, and you can see him play a rare hometown show next Friday, Sept. 21, at the WOW Hall, with more fizzy Zimbabwean marimba music from Kudana and Hokoyo, part of the local Kutsinhira organization that's done so much for African music here.

Another immigrant who's enriching America's musical mix is Fabrice Martinez, a French fiddler who carried his affection for Romanian folk music to Oakland, Calif., where he joined accordionist Aaron Seeman, Serbian jazz bassist Djordje Stijepovich, shamisen (a three-string lute used in Japanese folk music) virtuoso Mike Penny, singer/violinist/sawer Ursula Knudson and guitarist Doug Smolens in the **Fishtank Ensemble**. The eclectic band deliciously integrates rock, jazz, gypsy, classical, Swedish and Japanese folk and other influences in a vibrant gypsy cabaret concoction that should entice Eugene's contingent of Roma/Balkan music devotees and other world music fans. Catch 'em at the Landmark in Yachats on Sept. 23 or at Cottage Grove's Axe and Fiddle on

Sept. 24.

After burning down the house in several visits with his bands Critters Buggin and Syncopated Taint Septet, that irrepressible Seattle saxaholic **Skerik** returns to Eugene in yet another setting. His **Maelstrom Trio**, featuring Brooklyn pianist Brian Coogan (from Coalition of the Willing) and N'awlins drummer Simon Lott (recently touring with Charlie Hunter), leaves more space for Skerik's frenzied tenor exclamations; see him and his partners stretch it out at Sam Bond's Garage Sept. 16.

Jazz fans might also check out Portland's **Trio Subtonic**, whose keyboardist, Galen Clark, spent a winter in Brazil exploring samba and added those traditional rhythms, as well as deep funk and hip hop influences (they've worked with DJs), to the group's background in jazz and postclassical composition. It's still recognizably groove-based, funky melodic jazz, but spiced with a wider range of ingredients than most. The three-some plays Luna on Sept. 22. Another jazzy young trio, Eugene's **Bucket**, puts the electric guitar front and center like two of their models, John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra and Miles Davis's *Jack Johnson*-era band, and you can hear that '70s rock-jazz fusion sound, with a jam band garnish, at Cozmic Pizza on Sept. 16.

Anyone craving bleeding edge music, dance, theater, visual art and much in between — all conveniently crammed into a few nights — still has time to drive the 5 and catch the final weekend of Portland Institute for Contemporary Art's **Time-Based Arts Festival**. The shows I've seen so far have ranged from inscrutable half-baked ideas to brilliant concepts stretched beyond their optimal limits to powerful works of theater (the unforgettable, beautifully scripted and acted Mexican two-woman play *Las Chicas del 3.5 Floppies*), dance (Donna Uchizono Company) and sly, high-energy, hip-hop-infused performance poetry (Marc Bamuthi Joseph). This weekend: acclaimed New York experimental musicians **Fred Frith, Zeena Parkins** and **Ikue Mori** at the Wonder Ballroom Sept. 14, singer/performance artist **Holcombe Waller** Sept. 14-15, electronic musician/performer **Aki Onda** Sept. 16 and much, much more. Details at [www.pica.org/tba/tba07](http://www.pica.org/tba/tba07)

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