

MUSIC SHORTS

The Mutaytor



Funk in the Trunk

It's been over a year since the Yard Dogs Road Show delighted us with their vaudeville/cabaret act, and I'm beginning to think the town's due a mind-blowing audio/visual spectacle. Fortunately **The Mutaytor**, a traveling musical and theatrical revue, is touring in support of their June release, *Yelling Theatre in a Crowded Fire*.

The Mutaytor, which in total has 30-some members, describes itself as a modern-rock orchestra. Mixing tribal drums, mixed electronica, dancers, aerial artists and loads of horn instruments, the group infuses their funk-music sensibility with a flair for carnival theatrics. Unlike the Yard Dogs, whose show is largely divided by individual performances, The Mutaytor allows aspects of the show to meld and work with each other. More Vegas than cabaret, the group takes traditionally cabaret-style acts and gives them an edge, which no doubt stems from early performances at Burning Man and time in L.A.

Funk isn't everyone's bag, but just when you've pegged them as a one-genre band they change their tune. Influences from King Crimson, Earth Wind and Fire and Parliament-Funkadelic are heard on "Sunrise," a new age tune loaded with heavy percussion and ethereal vocals. But the group is also capable of rocking like Placebo, as they do on "The New Aquarian Phase." Their third release, which took two years to finish, is described as their most "ambitious and sonically evolved work to date." The true test of their music is whether it can stand on its own, without the live show to accompany it. I found myself less enthused about the music when listening to it alone, but videos of the group performing instantly resurrected my interest. Come see for yourself what the spectacle is all about. But don't be surprised to find yourself dancing on a gogo box or petting a Chinese parade lion – it's expected and perfectly normal. The Mutaytor plays with Solovox at 9 pm Saturday, June 7, at the WOW Hall. \$12 adv., \$15 door. – *Amanda Burhop*

Elegant Elephants

When elephants roam through Eugene, it won't sound like gnashing tusks and torn up trees but rather like sweet bluegrass revival. Led by former Eugene resident Dan Rose, **Elephant Revival** will march through town for the first time, celebrating the Memorial Day release of a new album, produced by David Tiller of TAARKA.

Lately of Nederland, Colo., Rose and his band of neo-gypsies formed Elephant Revival in October 2006. The band of multi-instrumentalists and songwriters delves into traditional fiddle tunes, bluegrass and original folk pieces, with a slew of instruments among the five of them: washboard, djembe, electric banjo, electric and acoustic guitar, double bass, mandolin, fiddle and five voices, each contributing their own mood and magic.

Elephant Revival is at its heart a bluegrass band, but the talents of all five combined lend it an air of something more. Poetic vocal phrasing conjures up

images of beautiful landscapes ("Seasons changing / I can smell it in the air / I can hear it in the wind / Hear it rise and descend" from "Ring Around the Moon"). Voices are earthy and rich, plucking steady and sure, rhythms haunting and ancient.

Some Elephant songs are spare; some are lively. All are soulful and somehow set apart from the average, with what seems like the common thread being simply the desire to reveal as much of their deep-heartedness as they can.

The Elephants converted their diesel-powered school bus to run on vegetable oil this year – a timely feat considering they are traveling all over the western half of the country from now until the end of August, performing in clubs and at festivals with barely a break for three months.

Elephant Revival and The Huckleberries play at 8:30 pm Saturday, June 7, at The Axe & Fiddle in Cottage Grove (\$5; 21+ show), and at 9 pm Sunday, June 8, at Cozmic Pizza. (\$5) – *Vanessa Salvia*



More Than Grunge

In an effort to spread the word about Seattle's burgeoning hip hop scene, Sportn' Life Records and Kublakai have launched the **206 Degrees and Rising Tour**, which runs through July. The tour hugs the Northwest coastline with shows throughout Oregon and Washington, exhibiting all the hip hop talent Seattle has to offer. As Sportn' Life Records owner and Tour/Program Co-Curator DeVon Manier explains in a press release, "Previously known for its grunge and indie rock music talent, Seattle and the NW is building quite the groundswell as the next place to blow up as a hip hop music hotbed, and we're starting to attract real national attention."

The tour features **D.Black**, **Kublakai**, **Cancer Rising** and **Neema**. This year Kublakai released his newest album, *The Basics*, which the artist described in a recent interview with Seattlest.com as "a mixture of brutal truth ... compassionate, light-

hearted social commentary with a sprinkling of personal struggles." On *The Basics* Kublakai rhymes aggressively over chopped-up soul and jazz samples, pontificating on the insipid nature of contemporary hip hop.

Seattle native D.Black, whose parents were pioneers in two of Seattle's first major hip hop groups, began recording with Sportn' Life Records when he was 16. Now 22, the lyricist continues to perform across the Northwest, building a reputation with the success of his 2005 mix tape *Behind the Dirt*. Usually performing two to four times every month, the artist has shared the stage with artists such as Mike Jones, Paul Wall, The Clipse, Do or Die and Andre Nikatina.

Catch the whole 206 Degrees lineup for free at CD World at 3 pm Friday, June 6, before they hit the stage later that night. Kublakai plays with Cancer Rising, Neema and D.Black at 10 pm Friday, June 6, at John Henry's. 21+ show. \$6. – *Zach Klassen*

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