

Straight Outta Humboldt

It's kind of surprising there aren't more bands like **Back in the Dark** playing around Eugene. This town is like the perfect Petri dish in which to watch musicians raised on good vibes and conscious values mature and become exposed to the deliciously painful joy of listening to rage rock while simultaneously figuring out that the world actually sucks. Nourished by a lifetime of nutritious food, surrounded by a loving community, these formative artists might have the unique awareness and confidence to capture and combine "lifestyle" genres that typically seem to be at odds with one another – in BITD's case, "hardcore hillbilly grunge hop." Is it possible to be truly "hardcore" and still picture yourself frolicking in overalls on the cover of your debut album? Sure, as long as you also picture your overalled ass stomping your smaller self on the flipside.

Back in the Dark is aware of their oxymoronic image and they're fine with it, so why shouldn't you be, fucker? Developed in a Humboldt County commune, this percussion-driven duo (J Rock Dark and G Nameless) might remind you of System of a Down one minute and old 311 the next (I said *old* 311, before their albums were used by poison control centers to induce vomiting). While BITD's sound is consistently pretty grinding and



loud, they mix it up enough to keep their first album fresh from track to track: a little spoken word here, a little guttural screaming there and some reggae thrown in to mellow it out, man. Lyrically they dabble in scathing social commentary,

murder fantasies fueled by vehicle envy, twisted love poetry and some good old fashioned ranting and raving. Don't be afraid to compromise either your hippie sensibilities or your punk rock street cred. Back in the Dark will let you have it both ways.

Back in the Dark celebrates the release of *Hardcore. Hillbilly. Hip. Hop* with Wanibra and Gladhander at 9 pm Friday, June 27, at the Oak Street Speakeasy. 21+ show.

– Adrienne van der Valk



Ryan Montbleau Band's music is music that you can't resist moving to.

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Ryan Montbleau started out as a solo act playing his guitar in Boston clubs and coffeehouses. Later,

Move Music

It's hard to pin down the genre that the **Ryan Montbleau Band** falls under, especially because the band skillfully incorporates elements of folk, Americana, blues, ragtime, jazz, R & B and soul into its sound. Despite drawing from many influences, all of the band's songs share Montbleau's characteristic vocals bursting over each track. Also, whether you're calmly rocking back and forth, shyly nodding your head in rhythm, tapping your feet or swaying and swinging all over the place, Ryan Montbleau Band's music is music that you can't

four other musicians (bass player Matt Giannaros, Jason Cohen on piano and other instruments, drummer James Cohen and viola player Laurence Scudder) joined him to create the band that bears his name. Like Montbleau, they aren't afraid to mix various genres to create a new sound. While the band's sound is cohesive, especially with the old-timey, folksy feel most of their songs share, when arranging songs the band members don't limit themselves in the many directions they can go. The Ryan Montbleau Band plays at 9 pm Monday, June 30, at John Henry's. 21+ show. \$10. – Inka Bajandas

Tuckered Out

When does a band become a brand? I'm not just talking about selling out; I mean, when does a band begin to exist in name only? Look at **The Marshall Tucker Band**. Them good ol' boys from Spartanburg, S.C., have been making music and touring for 35 years now. Songs like "Can't You See" and "Heard It in a Love Song" are staples on classic rock radio stations. Their trademark logo, with its ranch hand, cattle-brand font, and their lonesome cowboy album covers are as recognizable today as they ever were (even though they're mostly relegated to record store dollar bins). Time has given The Marshall Tucker Band their due as true Southern rock pioneers. But it's been a while since The Marshall Tucker Band pioneered anything at all.

For the last 25 years, The Marshall Tucker Band has been coasting on their name, playing the nostalgia circuit rather than making strides to expand their sound. And why not? The band has settled into a comfortable, radio-friendly country-rock mold that's about as radical as room temperature water. Their latest album, *The Next Adventure*, is a case in point. The veteran rockers know who their audience is and they give them what they want to hear – a relaxed, familiar and confident country-ish sound that won't top any critic's year-end lists and won't convert any new fans. And it doesn't matter. Folks will still go to the concerts and sing along to the hits because it's The Marshall Tucker Band, man. But is it? With only one remaining original member, lead singer Doug Gray, The Marshall Tucker Band of today could just as easily be the MTB tribute band playing the "dive" bar down the street. In the end, they're nothing more than a name and a tribute to themselves. The Marshall Tucker Band plays at 7 pm Saturday, June 28, at Secret House Vineyard, Veneta. \$20 adv. \$23 door. – Jeremy Ohmes

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