

Los Lonely Boys



Hail to Arthur

Tall and spindly and ever New York cool, solo musician **Joseph Arthur** (he also plays with his band the Lonely Astronauts) is an avant-gardist who continues to haul folk/rock kicking and squealing into the 21st century. He is equal parts innovator and throwback – a neo-technical auteur with one foot planted firmly in the spangled roots of rock history. With his digital delays and looping echoes, Arthur's haunting soundscapes conjure sealed-in universes of love, longing and regret, and yet the music underpinning his experimental yen is as tuneful and engaging as anything out there – a foundation of syncopated guitar coupled with a crooning voice that moves easily between deep baritone and a Prince-like falsetto. Arthur is a phenomenal songwriter as well, adept at penning both straight-ahead ballads and inverted pop songs full of esoterica and spacy quasi-religious poetry.

Something of a Renaissance man and guerrilla artist, Arthur is in the midst of releasing a suite of four EPs, the latest of which are *Vagabond Skies* – a creepy, obsessive batch of slower tunes harking back to his brilliant 2000 album *Come To Where I'm From* – as well as the more gritty

and eclectic *Foreign Girls*, which channels everything from Magnetic Fields to Leonard Cohen to *Hunky Dory*-era David Bowie

In the solo setting, Arthur is a one-man Radiohead, given to building multiple live guitar samples into a swelling, kaleidoscopic orchestra through which – sometimes after minutes of noodling – he finally injects a song. With most musicians, this sort of wait-and-see wankery could seriously test one's patience. In Arthur's hands, however, concentrated aural prologues become somehow fascinating, and it can be goose-pimple thrilling when a song finally kicks. He just might be one of the best musicians you've never heard of.

Joseph Arthur plays with Anna Ternheim at 8 pm Sunday, July 20, at the WOW Hall. \$13 adv., \$15 door. – *Rick Levin*

God Loves Rock and Roll

If you don't know **Los Lonely Boys**, it's likely that you know at least one single of theirs, "Heaven," which, for a period about two years back, was all over the radio (and made #1 on *Billboard's* Adult Contemporary chart). Even though songs about religion don't really do it for me (there's not much worse in music than sanctimony), I liked

that song because Los Lonely Boys didn't go there. It was just a sweet, simple ditty with nice harmonies about world-weary folks trying to become better people. But that's not the only thing Los Lonely Boys have done – and "Heaven" is probably about as poppy as it gets. Even when they're talking about God, Tejano brothers Henry, JoJo and Ringo Garza rock out in a style similar to fellow Texan and blues great Stevie Ray Vaughan. Like ol' Stevie (RIP), they take traditional blues guitar and speed it up to a rock and roll pace that's great for dancing (although they throw in the occasional slow number, too). They're just a basic guitar-bass-drums line-up, but Los Lonely Boys make the kind of feel-good stuff that's perfect for outdoor concerts, and that's what this is. Los Lonely Boys and Los Lobos play at 7 pm Sunday, July 20, at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. \$40 reserved, \$29 general admission. – *Sara Brickner*

I'm With the Band

In an era when pop musicians become just as famous for neglecting to wear underwear as for actually singing, it's easy to forget the bygone days when jazz was considered suggestive and ragtime was judged by some to be a symptom of society's moral decline. Thank goodness the **Two Man Gentlemen Band** hasn't forgotten. This dapper duo cut their teeth busking on the streets of New York City, reviving the cheery tempos and tailored duds of a generation that desperately needed music to lift Depression-era spirits. The mean streets of NYC taught

Andy Bean and bassist Fuller Condon this important lesson: When the band slows down, the audience takes a hike. So the Gentlemen rev up the tempo and keep it there, plucking, banging, strumming as if their lives depended on it.

Audiences needn't be jealous. The Two Man Gentlemen Band is happy to share the stage, handing out free kazooos so everyone can join in the music-making. Singing along is also encouraged. In fact, the closer the barroom comes to rocking its foundation as patrons clasp shoulders and raise their glasses, the better as far as these two are concerned. Old fashioned? A little, but The Gentlemen are far from just a throwback act. Naughty? Definitely, but never vulgar (with an album name like *Heavy Petting*, you can expect plenty of wink-nudge innuendo). Bean and Condon clearly design their show to put people in a good mood; their PG orientation and stylish stage presence add to a special breed of cheeky showmanship that is sadly missing from most music today. The Gentlemen want their audiences to have fun, whether singing along to songs about fooling around, expressing love through math problems or waxing melodic about William Taft (America's fattest president). Warm up your kazooing muscles and get ready to join the mayhem. The Two Man Gentlemen Band plays with Mad Tea Party and Jeff and Vida at 8 pm Tuesday, July 22, at Cozmic Pizza (\$7, all ages) and 8 pm Wednesday, July 23, at the Axe and Fiddle in Cottage Grove (\$5-\$8, 21+). – *Adrienne van der Valk*



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