



Sound For the Organization of Society

Not Your Grandfather's Big Bands

Keyboardist/cellist/composer Andrew Oliver left Portland for New Orleans in 2002 – and three years later was blown back home by a certain stormy lady named Katrina. While in the Big Easy, he formed **Sound For the Organization of Society**, an exceptionally accomplished nonet whose members boast an impressive range of backgrounds (classical, jazz, rock, microtonal, world music) and mentors (Darrell Grant, Wadada Leo Smith, Charlie Haden, Joe Lovano). Now scattered from L.A. to Japan to Madison and points between, they're reconvening this month for a West Coast tour which alights at Cozmic Pizza on Sunday. Don't let the band's somewhat pretentious name keep you away. With two of Oregon's most adventurous jazzers (Portland Jazz Composers' Ensemble founder Oliver and Blue Cranes leader Reed Wallsmith), two drummers, two saxes, guitar, two keyboards and more, the group members all compose and perform some of the most ambitious, progressive jazz-based music you'll hear this summer.

On Saturday night, Cozmic hosts a very different big band. The Bay Area's **Gamelan X** returns (after a rousing show at Sam Bond's a few months ago) with their flashy fusion of funky grooves from various world music traditions, Balinese gongs and other percussion, Western strings and winds and coordinated moves that are as fun to watch as to hear. Gamelan X performs at 7 pm Saturday, Aug. 2 (\$10), and Sound For the Organization of Society plays at 8 pm Sunday, Aug. 3 (\$6), both at Cozmic Pizza. – *Brett Campbell*

Welcome to the Machine

Barry Threw's laptop-generated soundscapes immerse listeners in ominous clouds of music occasionally lit by bolts of electronic sound. It's no surprise that the San Francisco-based electronic musician often works with visual art installations. Threw has collaborated with Southern California trumpeter/composer **Jeff Kaiser**, who's also played with important avant improv musicians such as Eugene Chadbourne and Emily Hay and written and performed music for films and TV. His microtonal music drifts toward ambient, with strange ripples and bursts of sound flashing through oddly compelling textures. Eugene's own **Warning Broken Machine** wrings subtle beauty from ostensibly non-musical sources such as amplified stones, glass and found pieces of metal. Springfield's **[view]** uses obsolete medical equipment such as muscle stimulators as sound sources. Though they come from disparate origins – improvisational music (so-called "creative" jazz, free jazz and non-jazz-based improv); the digital music cybersphere; ambient and noise bands – all use mechanical or electronic means to create fascinating soundscapes (some gentle, some searing) in which texture and atmosphere take precedence over traditional musical means such as melody and rhythm. They should make DIVA an ear- and mind-expanding place to be this Saturday. Jeff Kaiser, Barry Threw, [view] and Warning Broken Machine perform at 8 pm Saturday, Aug. 2, at DIVA. \$5. – *Brett Campbell*

doesn't sound like that's exactly what they did. That I was pleasantly surprised at the music shows how wrong I can be, as well as how jaded I get when most music that lands in my lap seems to have all of the quality of being shaped by a musical cookie cutter.

Byrd builds and layers, adding sounds organically and creating the depth of a full band. He takes basic rock instrumentation and makes it sound natural and hand-made (it is made by his hand, but you know what I mean). While in the studio (or his apartment), Byrd is the only presence creating music, but he does have a live band with Jason Blanton (bass) and Mike Presta (drums). Byrd's touring guitarist, Michael Gleason, lived in Eugene for six years but now calls Portland home.

There's a little bit of a lot of stuff going on in Byrd's music – fuzzy guitar and a J. Mascis-like lyrical howl and sense of urgency, and bits of noise from many of rock's major mileposts; classic, glam, folk, basically anything with a hook.



Ollie Byrd

Doing Right By Rock History (With Laptop)

Ollie Byrd is not a band. He is some kind of wunderkind who used to play in Seattle band Yeek Yak Airforce, then moved to Brooklyn two years ago.

It was there that he traded his four-track for a computer and recorded his debut, *Barrel O' Fun*, all by himself on a laptop in his apartment. This isn't the first time I've heard of a musician doing that; it's just so rare to find that the completed product

In an interview on antiMUSIC.com, Byrd says, "I guess I feel a kind of responsibility to the History of Rock to make songs that do something at least close to what great songs have done for me." When you have that philosophy, you're bound to get something right. Ollie Byrd and the Trees play at 9 pm Wednesday, Aug. 6, at Wandering Goat. Free. – *Vanessa Salvia*

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