

Northern Invasion

Portland acts acoustify Eugene venues

Covering everything from Bach to Zep, the **Portland Cello Project** brings new perspectives to a remarkably wide range of music. The fascinating lineup of eight to 16 cellists just released their first CD (see review at www.eugeneweekly.com/2008/07/10/music1.html) and an EP of Led Zeppelin covers. For their Aug. 16 show at Cozmic Pizza, they'll be joined by another of Portland's finest bands, the chamber-pop nonet **Loch Lomond**, which includes PCP founder Doug Jenkins on cello, plus viola, bass clarinet, violin, mandolin, piano, guitar,

bass, percussion and more — and Ritchie Young's haunting vocals. Their gentle, gliding tunes, cushioned by alluring vocal harmonies, remind me of some of the folk-influenced British acts of the 1960s. Either of these terrific bands would be worth the price (or a trip north on I-5, for that matter), but they're also bringing Portland's **Y La Bamba**.

Lisa Forkish also lives in Portland now, but locals remember the Eugene native for her excellent writing and singing for the UO vocal ensemble Divisi, her work with Girl Circus, performances



Lisa Forkish



Y La Bamba

with the Oregon Bach Festival's Youth Choral Academy, South Eugene High and more. After studying at Boston's renowned Berklee College of Music, she moved to Portland, and she's making a return visit to her hometown to play original jazzy, poppy folk songs from her new CD Aug. 9 at Jo Federigo's.

Still another Portland band, **Pachi Pamwe**, blends trumpet, bass, drums and mbira into a lively Afro-pop fusion. They're opening for the Zimbabwean quartet **Bongo Love** at Cozmic Pizza Aug. 18. As that nation implodes still further into repression and turmoil thanks to the election theft perpetrated by dictator Robert Mugabe, its touring and expat musicians are bringing the fruits of one of the world's great musical cultures to our ears. The charismatic songwriter and bandleader Oliver Mtukudzi just played Portland's Oregon Zoo, Cozmic Pizza hosted Mawungira Enharira last month and now, on the heels of three sell-out Madison Square Garden shows, here comes Bongo Love. The upbeat "Afro-coustic" music of this band of twentysomethings concentrates on the traditional instruments of the Shona people — marimba and mbira (the metal, harp-like Zimbabwean thumb piano), and they write their own extremely danceable songs, sung in English, Shona and Ndebele. Along with the Cozmic show, they're playing World Flavors on Aug. 16, with African food available.

The most ambitious edition of the **Oregon Festival of American Music** continues with productions of the musicals *Brigadoon* and *The Wizard of Oz* at the Hult Center's

Silva Concert Hall (various performances through Aug. 16) and some tasty afternoon concerts at the Shedd's Jaqua Concert Hall. *Brigadoon*, like *Oz*, is a never-never land that must have appealed to Americans worn down by war and a Republican-enabled, corporate-greed-inspired economic depression — so they're still relevant today. Inasmuch as the show appeared after the war, just as the world was entering a dramatic transmogrification, audiences might have been especially receptive to the nostalgic theme of a happy place — a Scottish village that appeared only once every century — that would never change. And like *Oz*, it's probably more familiar today via the movie, although Vincente Minnelli's bland 1954 film version excised seven of Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner's songs from the original 1947 stage score. It'll be fun to see the magic onstage.

If Hoagy Carmichael had never composed anything except "Star Dust" (which will forever battle Harold Arlen's "Over the Rainbow" as the greatest American pop song of the century) and "Georgia on My Mind," he'd be secure in the pantheon of American songwriters. But he created plenty of other classics: "The Nearness of You," "Body and Soul" and many more, as we'll hear at OFAM Aug. 7. Other highlights include the great Dick Hyman's solo jazz piano show Aug. 8 — no one alive knows this music better than the New York film music legend and OFAM emeritus jazz adviser — and all the free talks and films that make OFAM such an educational as well as entertaining delight.

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