

Not Six, Not Finnish

As cool as the name sounds, **The Hellblink Sextet** isn't really a sextet. The "psycho cabaret" band from Asheville, N.C., with elements of folk, gypsy, free jazz, punk rock and swing mixed into its sound, is actually currently a trio or a solo act by bandleader Andrew Benjamin, who performs in a top hat and tuxedo, face painted white, eyes lined in kohl, a pointy goatee rounding off the look.

In the past, Hellblink has performed as a true sextet, but nowadays Benjamin performs with Valerie Meiss, who contributes operatic vocals and plays the glockenspiel and various other instruments, and Brad Lunsford on bass and percussion. Their music is weird and quirky, with lyrics about the pirate's life or bad kids who aren't getting anything for Christmas. Many of the songs sound like they belong with something animated or made for kids but with a dark, sinister twist. This isn't so surprising, since *Sesame Street* songs are some of the band's biggest influences.

The band, created eight years ago, has been evolving for quite some time. Benjamin created The Hellblink Sextet to perform live after a debut album, featuring music he and his friends recorded at a party, failed to gain as much attention as he'd hoped. Although the band has since shrunk to half its original size, it has actually been a bonus, allowing them to tour more and making it easier to find a good groove together.

The Hellblink Sextet performs at 8:30 pm Sunday, Aug. 10, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+ show. \$5. — *Inka Bajandas*



Johnny Cash, Lost and Found

I have a few regrets in life. One is leaving a yard sale without that 1950s lamp with the blue shade that was priced at only \$5 (How could I walk away from that? Sigh). Another regret is not going to see the Man in Black when I had the chance. My friends were going. They bought tickets for his planned Portland appearance in — I think — 1997, and urged me to go with them. I almost did, but couldn't justify emptying my bank account for a ticket, drinks, gas, drinks, food, drinks, etc. My friends swore I'd regret the decision, but my money was precious, and that bag of pot (or whatever) that I was saving up for was precious, too.

As my friends described it later, the concert was better than seeing God, and only too late did I realize how foolish I had been. Still, I clung to the hope that I would have another opportunity to see Johnny Cash, and that chance came when he announced a Hult Center appearance the next year. Yes! I was first in line to buy a ticket. But sadly, soon an announcement was made about Cash's failing health, and shortly after that the Hult Center appearance was canceled, along with all of his other tour dates.

Watching Johnny Cash tribute band **Cash'd Out** perform is as close as we can get to the real thing now, and, in fact, they are the only tribute band endorsed by the official Cash website. Vocalist Douglas Benson looks eerily like Cash himself if you look at him sideways, and at times he's able to match that rich baritone. With Cash'd Out, you can "Walk the Line" back in time and get a taste of what an early Cash performance may have been like. Cash'd Out plays at 7 pm Thursday, 8/14, at John Henry's. 21+ show. \$9 adv., \$11 door. — *Vanessa Salvia*

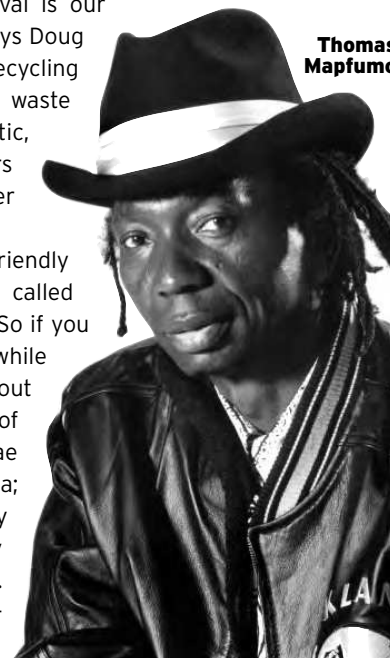


Reggae Fest Rolls Again

Reggae music, 100 percent organic food, education and sustainability. Sounds like the perfect world, right? At this weekend's **Northwest World Reggae Festival**, you can enjoy this ideal environment for three days straight. The festival is a vast celebration of reggae music, organic food and crafts from all corners of the world. Featured bands and musicians — from countries including New Zealand, Hawaii, St. Croix, Trinidad, Belize, the U.K, the U.S. and, of course, Jamaica — include Thomas Mapfumo, Macka B, Warrior King, Midnight, Mighty Diamonds, Sister Carol, Queen Omega, Katchafire, NOMO, Ooklah and Oregon's own Lafa Taylor.

"One of the most unique parts of our festival is our commitment to being as green as we can be," says Doug Carnie, the festival's director of operations. Recycling centers throughout the site include different waste streams allowing separate recycling for glass, plastic, paper and food products. All trucks and generators will run off biodiesel, and fresh on-site well water is available.

According to Carnie, the NWWRF is a family-friendly event and its location near Marcola has been called "the best small festival site on the West Coast." So if you want to participate in this cultural celebration while jammin' out to uplifting reggae music, come on out to the scenic festival "nestled in the foothills" of the Cascade Range. The Northwest World Reggae Festival takes place August 8-10 near Marcola; music starts at 5 pm Friday and 11 am Saturday and Sunday. \$110 three-day pass, \$90 Saturday and Sunday pass; \$40 Sunday only. Check www.nwworldreggae.com for more information. — *Courtney Jacobs*



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