



International Espionage!

Jam 'n' Grass

In 1995, the year Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia died, banjoist Dave Johnston met mandolin player Jeff Austin during their Urbana, Ill., college days. Johnston invited Austin to play and sing in his band The Bluegrassholes. Austin admitted he owned a mandolin but didn't actually play it. Johnston, obviously having faith in Austin, told him to "play anything, just play fast and loud!" The two moved to Colorado, where they met bass player Ben Kaufmann and guitarist Adam Aijala at a free-for-all jam session at The Verve, a bar outside of Boulder, in 1998. Upon that fortunate meeting, their niche was set. "It was an eye-opening experience because we heard a unique sound," says Johnston. "Something coalesced that night." That was the conception of the **Yonder Mountain String Band**, currently one of the fastest rising touring jam bands in the country. One of the most surprising things about these guys: None of them grew up listening to bluegrass music.

You can't call the Yonder Mountain String Band just another bluegrass band, not with influences like Hot Rize, The Seldom Scene, Frank Zappa, The Dead Kennedys and Ozzy Osbourne. Call them newgrass, jam grass or just a damn good band; whatever you call them, their music will get you on your feet

and a good time will be had by all. In the tradition of a true jam band, YMSB sets are loaded with improvisation and you'll never hear the same set list twice. Jerry would be proud. Yonder Mountain String Band and Sam Bush play at 9 pm Friday, April 17, at the McDonald Theatre. \$20 adv., \$25 door. – *Blake Phillips*

Don't Keep the Secret

There must be a lot of bad guys in Eugene. Why else would **International Espionage!**, that Minneapolis trio of spy-schtick-loving musicians, be returning less than a year after their last mission – er, show – here? Word of their impending arrival came in the form of an EP called *Transmissions*, complete with an urgent message from S.T.A.R.E. about K.N.I.F.E. – that'd be the Secret Tactical Agency for Running Espionage and the Kriminal Network Intent on Fighting Espionage. There's a membership card and everything.

IE!'s spy gimmick is impressively thorough, but it wouldn't mean anything if the EP's six exuberant songs couldn't stand on their own. "Attention" tunes in like a spy twisting the knobs of a radio, picking up just the right frequency: poppy guitars and synthesizers that combine for a giddy, Rentals-ish vibe. IE! isn't quite so shiny-happy as the Rentals, though; these

guys have been listening to both more punk rock (particularly the poppy kind) and more '80s bands. The electronic tidbits in their songs take on a sci-fi bent, sounding like kitch soundtracks and raygun blasts, and impatient rhythms lift IE! above its (kinda charming) schtick. It's new wavy spy rock you can dance to, provided you aren't scared of the bandmembers' tight black jumpsuits. Sneaky. International Espionage! and Motorik Musik play at 10 pm Saturday, April 18, at Luckey's. 21+. \$5. – *Molly Templeton*

Hunting Tigers

Jon Timm, who's probably better known locally as a member of Ingredients, can cover a decent amount of ground in just five songs. Timm recently finished his first solo EP, *Jon Timm's Island of Nectar Bees*. The five tracks share a sort of bent pop mindset that might remind you of Ween one minute, Modest Mouse the next ("Bright Fire Dogs," especially the vocals) and, er, Nelly the third (you pretty much just have to hear "E'ry Burry Her"). The EP has a half-handmade, half-electronic feel, not glossy and perfect, with its varied, sometimes layered vocals and acoustic guitars backed with drum machines and synthesizers. Timm wrote and recorded the five songs at home; he says "It was mastered by Chris Munson via e-mail from Eastern Kentucky University," which seems deeply appropriate for the thoroughly modern sound. "Tiger Hunters" has Timm speaking with over-precise enunciation that gives an arty self-consciousness to the playful song, dotted with electronic handclaps and beeps. It's a little bit sci-fi; it's a little bit ridiculous; it's a little bit unexpected while still sounding familiar in bits and pieces. Jon Timm celebrates the release of his EP at 10 pm Tuesday, April 21, at Luckey's. 21+. – *Molly Templeton*

Forget-Me-Nots

Sometimes the most energetic and lively shows don't come from a stage full of performers, but from just a couple of people playing together who really enjoy what they're doing. It's obvious that **Forgotten Works** falls into the latter category. The duo of David Norem and Dan Reyhle formed in 2005, and though it's only been about three years, they've played all over Oregon and are celebrating the release of their second full-length recording, *The Key*. Both men play guitar and bass, sing and provide percussion, while Reyhle adds in mandolin. Don't let that instrumentation trick you into thinking they're a bluegrass band – these songs reach much further afield, the gestures sometimes grand; the palette sometimes poetic, sometimes sentimental; the melodies at times warm, other times jaunty.

On "Pincher & Scales," the pair's mandolin and guitar dance around each other like moths circling a campfire, while both trade off on the vocal delivery. "The Bridge" is an example of the slightly darker, more somber direction they've taken with *The Key*, sounding quite a bit like Crazy Horse-era Neil Young, with messy guitars that refuse to be pinned down. "Gold" is much softer, with a tone palette like its name, the colors of a sunset at the end of a warm day. "Western Horizon" is a short but stand-out track, with guitar work and harmonies sweetly reminiscent of Pete Krebs & the Gossamer Wings. Norem and Reyhle also provide visual interest along with their moody compositions; while on stage they are frequently accompanied by visual art such as paintings, videos and sculptures made by Norem. Forgotten Works and Jahmalia play at 9 pm Wednesday, April 22, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+. \$4. – *Vanessa Salvia*



Forgotten Works

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