



Starfucker

Dance the Geek Away

Jupiter, the latest release from Portland's **Starfucker**, is a "dance mini-LP," a companion piece to last year's self-titled release. The two albums line up in iTunes alphabetically by title, in reverse chronological order, meaning you drift right from *Jupiter's* "Rawnauld Gregory Erickson the Second (Strategy Remix)" into last year's "Florida" without a bump. "Florida" is all handclap-dotted, easygoing electronic cheer – Starfucker's stock in trade – while that Strategy remix of a song from *Starfucker* is a little twitchier, spacier, more intense. It works as a cool-down closing track for *Jupiter*, which has a playful fizz, a tendency toward matching tones that sound borrowed from a retro video game with a glossy pop sensibility. It's kind of indie rock, even though it's also dance pop, and, somehow, it's so perfectly *Portland*: Gleefully homemade but buffed to a reflective sheen. Thoroughly accessible once you take that first step into mellow-voiced bandleader Josh Hodges' world. Nerdy enough for hipsters but so rhythmically infectious, so oddly joyful (particularly "Medicine"), you don't dare stand still. Inside too many self-conscious music geeks there's a dancer just waiting to break out; Starfucker is the soundtrack to that moment (and not just because their cover of "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" is so amusingly deadpan). Let the burbles and beats of "Boy Toy" break the shell, and then make it your I-wish-it-were-summer theme song. Starfucker, Mt. St. Helens Vietnam Band, Boy Meets Drum Machine, Rare Monk and Trufflehunter play KWVA's birthday bash at 7:30 pm Friday, May 8, at the WOW Hall. \$5; free for UO students and KWVA members. – Molly Templeton

Byzantine Green

It's easy being green now, what with global warming, peak oil and other environmental crises threatening our way of life. But environmental concerns have long fueled composer **Robert Kyr's** work. Far from the stereotype of the ivory tower academic, the UO music professor has been concerned about violence against people and nature for decades. He moved to Oregon in part for its natural beauty, and many of his works, while avoiding polemics, preachiness or propagandizing, have embraced themes of nature. For his beautiful "environmental oratorio," *A Time for Life*, which will be performed at the UO's Beall Concert Hall as part of a five-day symposium on "Ethics, Religion, and the Environment," Kyr devised what he calls a "composite text" from a variety of sources, including prayers of various indigenous

Americans. "I was thrilled to discover a variety of source texts – some of them ancient – that focus on the same kinds of issues we face today," he said. They will be sung by one of America's finest vocal ensembles, Portland's **Cappella Romana**, which specializes in Byzantine repertoire; Kyr assigned texts from the Eastern Orthodox "Service for the Environment" to one of its members who's a skilled Orthodox cantor. The group's experience with modern and ancient sounds made it a fine match for Kyr's music, which artistic director Alexander Lingas describes as "a synthesis of elements – of Western medieval and Renaissance, Byzantine and folk, and all quite well integrated." Kyr's original version in Portland last year held the audience spellbound, and they responded with rapturous and deserved applause. The premiere of this new version will feature a

string trio from another of the Northwest's finest musical institutions, **Third Angle New Music Ensemble**, and shouldn't be missed by anyone who cares about the future of music or our home planet. Capella Romana performs *A Time for Life* at 7 pm Saturday, May 10, at Beall Hall, UO. \$10. – Brett Campbell

Folk/Rock

If I say the **Indigo Girls** just released a super mellow album, what am I going to tell you next – the sky's blue? Yep. Blue sky, road trips with the top down, summer festivals ... and social consciousness too; it's all here. The Girls' new album, *Poseidon and the Bitter Bug*, contains both electric and acoustic version of each song (plus an extra acoustic song, "Salty South," chock full of banjo-y goodness). The electric versions emerged from the speakers with such a laid-back, relaxed feel that I had to click back and forth on iTunes to convince myself that yes, these were the plugged-in pieces. Amy Ray, the dark-haired, punkier side of the duo, released her third solo album, *Didn't It Feel Kinder*, from her Daemon Records label last August. She must have gotten all of the angst out on her solo tour, for in late March came *Poseidon*, the Girls' first independent production since 1987's *Strange Fire*. Concert sound people know that it's an unforgivable sin to muddy the vocals for this tight harmony duo, so it's odd that several of the mixes on *Poseidon* bury the harmonies. A bit of energy infuses Ray's "Ghost of the Gang" (where sad lyrics belie the gentle, poppy beat) and "True Romantic," whose power ballad overtones nudge up the emotional volume a smidge. I wrote to a friend on Facebook, "This. Is. The. Calmest. Album. Ever;" but the mix of quiet nostalgia and light bounce proves perfect for sunny May days warming up our rain-fed and shiny trees and flowers. As any IG fan knows, seeing the Girls live trumps anything on the albums; luckily for Eugene, they're playing a Mothers' Day concert downtown. The Indigo Girls play with Matt Morris at 8 pm Sunday, May 10, at the McDonald Theatre. \$32 adv., \$35 door. – Suzi Steffen

It's Not You, It's Me

There's a genre of music out there that is tailor-made for primetime dramas and rom-com montages. You know, that acoustic pseudo-Dave Matthews coffee-shop radio-friendly pop that's completely innocuous, yet really freaking catchy. It's perfect for that scene when the guy breaks up with the girl or vice versa and it's bittersweet but also sort of liberating, and the writers don't know where to go from there, so they fill in the gaps with some up-tempo adult alternative ditty. **Mike Doughty** plays that kind of music – and there's nothing wrong with that. He used to be the frontman for the genre-bending, beatnik "Super Bon Bon" group known as Soul Coughing, but that was a decade ago. Since then he's carved out a niche as a solo acoustic troubadour, schlepping his guitar on tour after tour and selling his songs to shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, *Bones*, *What About Brian* and *Veronica Mars*. With its syncopated acoustic shuffle and pleasantly lazy vibe, Doughty's music is perfect in its predictability. And there's nothing wrong with that either. It's just that I can't listen to that type of music without throwing up in my mouth a little bit. Sorry, Mike; it's not you, it's me. Mike Doughty plays at 9 pm Tuesday, May 12, at the WOW Hall. \$16 adv., \$18 door, \$20 reserved seating – Jeremy Ohmes



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