



Owl City

PAMELA LITTKY

Hooting Quietly

Owl City makes the gentlest, sweetest, safest electro-pop I think I've ever heard. The one-man-band is the project of Adam Young, a sweet-faced young fellow who explains – on his MySpace page (where he boasts more than 125,000 friends), of course – that he doesn't sleep well. "These songs are all I have to show for my sleepless nights," he writes. (He also writes that he follows Jesus Christ "wholeheartedly," which probably explains why he's touring with Christian rockers Relient K.) Young's songs are smooth, delicate pop love songs, as spotless and sweet as any carefully selected vision of young love that might beam off a magazine page yet still

sporting a handmade touch. Young's stuff is all self-released (his next album, *Ocean Eyes*, comes out in September), but there's such a sincere gloss to his sound that he could easily appeal to fans of various manufactured pop acts. But the buoyancy and disarmingly, inexplicably *kind* feel of a song like "Hot Air Balloon" puts Young into a category of his own; nothing here feels as calculated as it easily could. At times, Owl City sounds like the aural representation of a John Hughes movie: yearning and young, retro and nostalgic, forever relevant to the teen who related to it maybe a little too much. Relient K, The Classic Crime and Owl City play at 7:30 pm Friday, May 29, at the District. \$15 adv., \$18 door. – *Molly Templeton*

A Change is Gonna Come

Eugene music fans can thank the fortuitous combination of a brewery's generosity and a band's inspired rock sounds for an exciting new local release. Popular beermeister Ninkasi Brewery is sponsoring **Cambio**, whose self-titled debut album is due out May 30. Though the name is Spanish for "change," Cambio's music isn't Latin at all. Instead it's a completely danceable fusion of guitar-led rock, pop and blue-eyed soul. And like a well-crafted brew, no single ingredient overpowers the blend of the whole.

The members of Cambio call themselves "progressive rhythm and blues," but that's not quite an adequate descriptor by itself. "On the Beach" sounds as if they've tapped into some underground spring of vintage garage and surf influences. Decidedly funkier is "In a Moment," with a shape-shifting bass and a musical vocabulary that recalls the heyday of '70s funk 'n' roll. One track, "Holla," reminds me of one of my most fave bands ever, The Sea and Cake. It has a swooning, sunny keyboard line and elegant percussion that lifts troubles right off my shoulders. From whatever genre their songs are approached, Cambio leaves open a spot to settle in and keep listening – and dancing – that feels just right.

Following the album's debut, Ninkasi will sponsor Cambio for three short West Coast tours this summer, to spread the gospel of good beer and help Cambio find a wider audience, which shouldn't be any trouble at all. A vinyl 45-rpm single is slated for a mid-summer release. Cambio, Saltlick and The Traitor Hearts play at 9 pm Saturday, May 30, at Oak Street Speakeasy. 21+. Free. – *Vanessa Salvia*



Cotton Jones

Basket Riding

Cotton Jones, or the band formerly known as The Cotton Jones Basket Ride, sounds like a more fleshed out, folksier incarnation of Page France, the group frontman Michael Nau laid to rest in order to bring Cotton Jones, a former side project, to the forefront of his audience's attention. It was almost a bait-and-switch; Page France ceases to exist with no fanfare whatsoever, and suddenly, Cotton Jones signs to Suicide Squeeze. Cotton Jones' first full-length record to be released on that label, *Paranoid Cocoon*, is a summery, harmonic folk album that got a "meh" from Pitchfork but deserves the attention of everyone who loves things like Magnolia Electric Co., Andrew Kenny (of American Analog Set and new band The Wooden Birds), Iron & Wine and contemporary indie folk in general. Cotton Jones and Parson Red Heads play at 9 pm Sunday, May 31, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+. \$7. – *Sara Brickner*



KRISTIN LIDELL

Jens Lekman

Swedish Day

One of the few times I went from miserable to merry in the span of a few seconds was when I saw **Jens Lekman** at Chicago's Pitchfork Festival in 2006. It was the end of July, and the afternoon temp was hovering around 100. In Midwest terms, that means the sweaty, oppressive hand of humidity made it feel like 110. I had just watched an uninspired performance from Tapes 'n Tapes (remember when they were hot shit-fodder for the Pitchfork hype machine?) on a dusty, baked baseball diamond, and I was pissed off at everything.

Right when I was waving my fist at the sun, the stage and the apoplectically hip atmosphere, a small Swedish man darted up to the mic and immediately cooled off the crowd with some witty, self-deprecating banter and contagiously buoyant charm. Then, with an all-female backing band that looked like the Robert Palmer girls on Prozac, the sprightly troubadour launched into the shimmering, indie-pop charmer "A Sweet Summer's Night on Hammer Hill" – complete with handclaps, a horn section and a chorus of heartbeat-inspired bum-bum-bums. After the first verse – "I still remember 'Regulate' with Warren G / Could that have been back in the sweet summer of 1993?" – I caught myself beaming along with a couple thousand other sticky souls. For the next 45 minutes I was smitten by Lekman – his sweetly sly, instantly memorable melodies and hilarious yet heartfelt lyrics, all of it surrounded by a slew of guessing-game samples and delivered as deadpan as Jonathan Richman. It was one of those performances that changed the whole tone of the festival, inspiring everyone to say fuck it and to just laugh with the Swede at the white-hot sun. Jens Lekman plays with Tig Notaro at 8 pm Wednesday, June 3 at WOW Hall. \$15. – *Jeremy Ohmes*

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