

One Love

Festival aficionados, don't put away your dusty dancing feet just yet. The biggest local reggae event this summer is around the corner. Tucked away in the lush hills of Marcola, this year's **Northwest World Reggae Festival** promises to showcase some of the best conscious-minded music performers and vendors.

"Our big push is to bring magic to everyone who is there," says Doug Carnie, the NWWRF director of operations.

NWWRF plays like a travel guide, featuring close to three dozen acts from around the globe, including Jamaica, Trinidad and Hawaii.

Saturday night features the event's celebrated Jamaican artists such as Michael Rose, Junior Reid and Pablo Moses. Friday offers a mostly female lineup, with Queen Omega and Zili Misik gracing the stage. Sunday's lineup includes popular, influential reggae acts like iconic Hawaiian performers Paula Fuga and Ooklah the Moc, legendary Pablo Moses and roots reggae band Groundation.

Carnie says sustainability and family-friendliness top this year's priorities. The main stage operates on a generator fueled by food grease, while the two other stages are powered by biodiesel. Booths use organic materials in all meals and items.

An expanding children's area sits under a tree canopy within view of the main stage. Families and friends are encouraged to camp on the grounds, where plenty of space, running water and even heated showers are provided. In between great acts and vendors, relaxation stays key with yoga, henna and massage booths, as well as a wood-covered sauna.



Junior Reid

"We just hope that everybody wants to come out and have a really good time," Carnie says.

Before the summer slows down, be sure to relish one last weekend festival – and don't forget your red, yellow and green. The Northwest World Reggae Festival takes place Aug. 7-9 in Marcola. \$110 three-day pass; \$90 Saturday & Sunday pass; \$50 Sunday only. (Camping included.) www.nwworldreggae.com – *Sachie Yorck*

Or the What?

San Francisco folk act **Or, the Whale** suffers from a name that seems – depending on who you talk to – either an insufferably pretentious Melville reference or just plain ill-conceived, but the band's breed of West Coast Americana will chase any taxonomic misgivings right out of your head. These Californians do twang with a lazy ease, and with seven members, they amount to something between a honky-tonk orchestra and Jefferson Airplane. While the band's first album, *Light Poles and Pines*, felt harried, sloppy and even a little contrived (they *did* record it in a single weekend), the band's upcoming self-titled sophomore



Or, the Whale

record proves that it pays to take your time. Comprised of more deliberate, multi-faceted compositions, it treads well outside the realm of Americana, and since donning a cowboy hat and adding a pedal steel player seems to be the hip thing to do to your rock band right now, it's a wise move. Sometimes, that means a relatively sparse arrangement. "No Death" pares things down to a wailing pedal steel, basic percussion, rhythm guitar and a simple refrain. "Datura," a song about drugs (what'd you expect from an alt-country band from San Francisco?) starts simply, then swells into a plaintive refrain

that culminates in a swingin' piano solo. And then there are numbers like "Black Rabbit," whose bombastic guitars and wailing female vocals smack of a like-minded psychedelic act from Canada, Black Mountain. Whatever your feelings about *Light Poles and Pines*, put them aside when you listen to this record (it comes out September 22), because it's so good that you'll probably have to check and make sure you're listening to the same band. Or, the Whale and Guitar Recovery Project play at 8:30 pm Thursday, Aug. 13, at the Axe and Fiddle, Cottage Grove. 21+ \$3. – *Sara Brickner*

Playing in the Eug

Fred Van Vector is sick of Eugene. I think. "Leaving Eugene," from his new CD *Everything Good All At Once*, is pretty convincing – "I'm so sick of Eugene / She always repeats / It's the same old song on her potholed streets" – but Van Vector's bio explains that this is one of three songs that resulted from a songwriting challenge. A handful of participants (including Bob Schneider and Jason Mraz) would agree on a few words, then have 24 hours to write a song using those words. So is it truth or exercise? Does it matter? Van Vector's chipper, poppy, chatty songs tell quirky stories about falling in love, hating a dude named Glen and riding around on a one speed bike that becomes a metaphor for keeping things simple and cool. There's a certain tongue-in-cheekness to "Pixie Stick Girl" (another word challenge track), which blends its silly image with a plaintive acoustic guitar and a winking accordion. "I Love Me" has a certain Randy Newman tinge, while "Mexican Guitar" amps Van Vector's sillier side to almost schtick levels. But "L-O-V-E A.D.D." is compulsively catchy, and *Everything's* first song, "Bottle of Wine," complete with snapping fingers and copious harmonies, is a jaunty, wry pop song that wouldn't be out of place on a Fountains of Wayne album. Van Vector has a knack for a playful melody, and *Everything Good All At Once* is a solid, respectable debut – which makes it sound a lot drier than it actually is. The details are local (Roseburg High, LCC, those potholes) but the sentiments are universal: pretty girls, compulsive crushes, cruising to the coffee shop. Van Vector seems to stay at a slight distance, tucking the sincerity of his songs behind word games and clever rhymes, but if you're a fan of smart, solid, narrative singer-songwriter tunes with a goofy side, you'll likely still be charmed. Fred Van Vector celebrates the release of *Everything Good All At Once* at 9:30 pm Saturday, Aug. 8, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+. \$5. – *Molly Templeton*



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