



Old Crow's New Roots

If forced to choose one group to credit with bringing contemporary bluegrass music into popular music's mainstream, that distinction would belong to **Old Crow Medicine Show**, whose modern interpretation of old-timey American music styles – bluegrass, folk, blues – has been making converts and rekindling interest in the genre for more than a decade. Since Old Crow Medicine Show began performing their modern interpretation of 1940s “medicine shows” back in the mid-’90s (and longer than that, if you consider that founding members Ketch Secor and Chris “Crittter” Fuquaand started performing at open mics before they’d even made it to high school), the band’s earned themselves plenty of imitators, but OCMS is the genuine article. They have become, over the years, something of a gateway band for twentysomethings who listened to OCMS before they ever admitted to liking country music, and for older fans, an affirmation that folk music is not going to languish in history books, but is a living, breathing American tradition that’s as inextricable from our nation’s history as the Constitution. And if OCMS gets gigs opening for everyone from Willie Nelson to the Dave Matthews Band, it’s because they are, more than any other old-timey band playing today, the best at convincing skeptics to kick off their shoes and come on in to the Americana revival tent. The band’s most recent release, 2008’s *Tennessee Pusher*, is emblematic of the group’s sound, and even though it’s not their best record, studio material isn’t the band’s main attraction, anyway. It’s always been the their live shows, not their albums, that work best at turning bluegrass agnostics into true believers. Old Crow Medicine show plays at 7 pm Tuesday, Oct. 6, at the McDonald Theatre. \$21.50 adv., \$24 door. – *Sara Brickner*

Warpaint Rising

“If you’re feeling bold,” the never-shy music site Pitchfork wrote in July, “you might point out the possibility of **Warpaint** usurping Chan Marshall’s throne.”

I’m not feeling *quite* that bold, but Marshall – whom you know better as Cat Power – was one of the first comparisons I thought of while listening to *Exquisite Corpse*, the debut EP from the L.A. quartet Warpaint. It’s the song “Billie Holiday” that does it; the guitar line that starts the song is as pretty, graceful and ominous as anything Marshall’s written. Warpaint’s three female vocalists – two of whom, Emily Kokal and Theresa Wayman, are from Eugene – sing the letters of Billie Holiday’s name as the song loops around on itself, a synth creeps in to add texture and a simple, sturdy drum part adds a sense of urgency. The nearly seven-minute song’s repetition is dreamlike, the breathy vocals soothing and disconcerting at once, particularly when the band turns “My Girl” on its head partway through. “Nothing you can say can take me away from my guy,” sung ever so sweetly, sounds remarkably like a threat.

Exquisite Corpse is moody, shifty, gorgeous and affecting. In the space of minutes, a song that begins with a sly, crisp, talky vocal morphs into a longing, lovely section in which drawn-out, ethereal lyrics contrast with an almost militaristic simplicity from the rhythm section. “Elephants” has an angular, post-punk intensity; “Burgundy” calls The Cure to mind. In an interview with the website Dazed Digital, the band described their sound as, “An eclectic collective of people and sounds running and dancing and screaming and crying, and when the day’s done a soft voice to gently calm your nerves and put yo ass to sleep.” Buzz about Warpaint’s live shows suggest that the sleep part won’t come until well after they’ve left the stage.

Warpaint and the Ascetic Junkies play at 9 pm Wednesday, Oct. 7, at Sam Bond’s Garage. 21+. There’s no cover, so there’s no excuse for missing it. – *Molly Templeton*



Hobohemian Rhapsody

It’s just as well that YouTube and my computer don’t get along these days, right? ‘Cause I don’t want to know exactly what to expect when I go see the **Yard Dogs Road Show**’s troupe of musicians, sword swallowers, bellydancers, fire eaters and burlesque dancing girls this week. Though those words do give a pretty clear impression. The Dogs’ website is full of phrases that elicit an even lovelier mental image: The performers “require a sensitivity to the subtle and the absurd. They lead the modern hobohemian on a visual and sonic journey through part of history that may or may not have existed – followed by an ambitious return to the emotional challenges of our punch-drunk contemporary world.” (Also? This band gives me stockings envy. Just look at those tights!)

The Road Show is currently touring on their *September Summer* EP, four songs of languid, drifting guitar, twisted ‘60s-tinged pop, sultry horn solos and the music-box delicacy of the intro to “Bokonon,” a shifty song which veers from dreamy ballad territory into a dark and mysterious place where a scream dots an instrumental section and a Yard Dog with a gorgeous, throaty voice sings about wishing the world would make sense. It’s a portrait, a canvas and a soundtrack; just call up the visions in your head. Or go see them during the Dogs’ strange, traveling cabaret of wonders.

The Yard Dogs Road Show performs at 8 pm Thursday, Oct. 1, at the McDonald Theatre. \$18 adv., \$20 door. – *Molly Templeton*



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