

Amos Lee, Vusi Mahlasela

8 pm Saturday, Jan. 22

McDonald Theatre

\$22.50 adv., \$25 door



Headed Down to that Mission Bell

Amos Lee takes his new songs on the road

Knowing the perfect soundtrack to play while out on the road is important, but it's just as important to find something calming while you rest your bones after a long drive. There are tunes that just sound like road trips, and intentional or otherwise, Amos Lee's songs are the epitome. His voice is soft, his arrangements soothing; it all fits together like Tetris.

Lee hits the road Jan. 20, expecting to stop and calm the McKenzie for a night early on in the tour. He'll be backing his fourth album, a poppy collection of his best country-folk anthems. Whether guest appearances on the tour will be a factor is unconfirmed, though Lee's new full length, *Mission Bell*, does contain collaborations with the likes of Lucinda Williams, Willie Nelson and Sam Beam. By virtue of this fact, it's probably a safe bet that the show won't be the mosh pit of the century, but rather the perfect escape from the cold stress of this New Year.

Mission Bell is a far more personal work than Lee's prior releases; it is a poignant, 12-track record that examines the re-evaluation of life, and where to go next.

"It's pretty personal," Lee says. "There's always gonna be an outside perspective inspired by other sources, but certainly 'Windows Rolled Down' is autobiographical." He goes on to say that "El Camino" and "Flower" also hold weight at a personal level. As for the rest of the tracks on *Mission Bell*: "It's about half and half," he says. "I just sort of wait for the tunes to come, and when they come I finish them up pretty quick. If they aren't going anywhere, I put them aside, and if they don't come back, it wasn't meant to be."

Lee has been up to more than just recording *Mission Bell*. CMT's "Artists of the Year" special saw him crooning delicately alongside the Zac Brown Band, he's got a Daytrotter session to his name and he made waves at *Austin City Limits* last year. Things seem to be looking up, and this tour should be the icing on the cool cake.

So whether it's the rain and cold that's got you down, or your legs are just tired from a hard day's work, it shouldn't be all that difficult to stand up in the face of Amos Lee. — *Andy Valentine*

Generational Regeneration

Rising talent takes the stage in Eugene

This month offers opportunities to see accomplished masters meeting and mentoring the next generation's rising stars — who are in turn reinvigorating older traditions. After a stellar career at the UO, trumpeter/composer **Douglas Detrick**, who grew up in Portland, made the bold and apparently inevitable move east last year. He's returning from the Bronx for some projects this month and next; more on the latter next time. On Monday, Jan. 31, Detrick's chamber jazz group (sax, trumpet bassoon, cello, drums) **AnyWhen Ensemble** performs Detrick's unique blend of jazz, classical and avant-garde influences at the UO's Beall Concert Hall. The concert guest stars one of Detrick's mentors, a previous-generation jazzier who also explores more "composed" territories. Like Detrick, Seattle pianist/composer **Wayne Horvitz** maintains different ensembles devoted to his jazzier and more "classically" influenced sides, but he made the opposite move: to the Northwest after forging a brilliant reputation on New York's adventurous downtown music scene in the 1980s. He'll join AnyWhen for a performance of Detrick's new extended work, *Rivers Music*, inspired by the movement of water. With its placid stretches, spare, pensive solo passages and emphasis on texture and atmosphere more than melodic inventiveness, the spacious six-movement, partly improvised work (which will be released on CD at this concert) will appeal to fans of Gil Evans' great orchestral jazz or the old Third Stream classical-jazz hybrids as well as contemporary "classical" music.

You can glimpse the talent pool from which Detrick and other erstwhile Eugene jazzers emerged this weekend at the LCC Performance Hall, when the 2011 **Oregon Jazz Festival** brings musicians from LCC, the UO and beyond to teach workshops for middle- and high-school students and show audiences the state of the art in today's and tomorrow's jazz. This year's featured artist, saxophonist and award winning composer **Donny McCaslin**, earned praise for his work in the Dave Douglas Quintet and with Maria Schneider, Luciana Souza, Pat Metheny and other jazz stars. He'll join the Lane and Oregon Jazz Ensembles in a big band concert on Friday, Jan. 21, and then on Saturday night complete a quartet with some of Portland's hardest-grooving jazzers: pianist **Randy Porter**, bassist **Dave Captein** and drummer **Gary Hobbs**.

One of New York's great jazz pianists for the past half century, the frequent Eugene visitor Dick Hyman, mentored one of this era's greatest jazz pianists, **Bill Charlap**, whose incomparable New York-based trio (with drummer Kenny Washington and, this time, bassist Sean Smith) returns to the Shedd's Jaqua Concert Hall Friday, Jan. 28. As far as I can tell, Charlap, who got his start playing with Gerry Mulligan and Phil Woods, has never made a bad record nor even hit a bum note. He epitomizes crisp pianistic elegance and nonchalant virtuosity, especially when playing the classic American songbook tunes he so cherishes.



Speaking of the great American songbook, it does seem odd that classic jazzers and cabaret singers always seem to be limited to show tunes written between, say, 1920 and 1960. Singer **Evyne Hollens**, who founded the UO's impressive Divisi women's a cappella group, wants to update it, so on Friday, Jan. 21, and Sunday afternoon, Jan. 23, she'll bring songbook 2.0 to the Shedd, enlisting Shedd vets Bill Hulings, Shirley Andress, Siri Vik, Bob Cross and the UO's On the Rocks founder Peter Hollens. They'll sing songs from *Shrek the Musical*, *In the Heights*, *Sister Act the Musical* and other contemporary show tunes.

The **Eugene Symphony's** concerts this month at the Hult Center's Silva Hall spotlight one of the most acclaimed old masters and one of today's hottest young performers. Still safely under 30, cellist **Alisa Weilerstein** has earned widespread and deserved praise for her tasteful virtuosity. This Thursday, Jan. 20, she'll solo in one of classical music's most popular concertos, Dvorak's *Cello Concerto*. The concert also features Schumann's *Symphony #3* and Samuel Barber's pulse-pounding *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*. Next Saturday's (Jan. 29) annual gala celebration and benefit auction concert offers Beethoven's *Symphony #1*, Johann Strauss's *Emperor Waltz* and another of the greatest concertos, the second one Mendelssohn wrote for violin, with the celebrated **Itzhak Perlman** as soloist.

Yet another clutch of rising stars opens the new year's UO chamber music series at Beall Hall. On Sunday, Jan. 30, the award winning **Jupiter String Quartet**, who studied under members of the great Takacs and Cleveland Quartets, play quartets by Beethoven and Bartok (the bracing, folk-influenced *String Quartet #3*) and will be joined by promising young Portland pianist Benjamin Kim (whose mentors include Leon Fleisher and Marta Argerich) for Shostakovich's striking 1940 *Piano Quintet* in G minor. And the torch continues to pass down the generations. — *Brett Campbell*