

Back From the Otherside

It's said that money grows on the tree of persistence. **Mackelmore** is not a millionaire or even an underground hip hop legend – yet – but as an artist in a medium that has all but dwindled away to popular conglomerate genres of glitch hop and dub step, he is a talented survivor who didn't quit. And it paid off.

Mackelmore's return to the mic and the stage is a personal triumph as well as a regional victory for Seattle-based underground hip hop. Before falling off the map, he was a familiar face around the Seattle and Olympia underground scenes from about 2001 to 2006. Given that this time period roughly straddled the rising spike and sharp decline of conscious hip hop in the U.S., it's doubtful that Mackelmore's disappearance from the scene was considered unusual. Many an underground MC tapped out during that exact period of time.

But as the saying goes, the cat came back. After battling substance abuse for several years, an issue addressed in his brutally honest new song "Otherside," Mackelmore and producer Ryan Lewis have been cranking out hip hop with dogged perseverance. Picked up by the Agency Group, an international booking company that also represents A Tribe Called Quest and Flogging Molly, Mackelmore and Lewis will be rocking stages on a national tour that passes through town Tuesday. Hip hop heads, make your way out of the woodwork for this one. Also, look for Portland-based hip hop group Gray Matters to be on the bill.

Mackelmore and Ryan Lewis play with Blue Print and Gray Matters at 8 pm Tuesday, March 1, at Wow Hall; \$13 adv., \$15 door.

– Dante Zuñiga-West



Raw Stringband Goodness

Solid instrumentation is a facet of folk, country and bluegrass that should never be ignored, and **The Brothers Comatose** certainly don't miss this aspect of the genre. The coolest part of their music, though, is the songwriting. It's often fun and upbeat, but sometimes you feel slightly taken aback by the eeriness of it all.

The first four members of Bros. Comatose met in high school – with the exception of brothers Ben and Alex Morrison – and quickly took to jamming together, though a band was never truly formed until the five of them all found themselves in San Francisco eager to get a real project started.

The outcome is raw stringband goodness, full of inventive instrumentation and nice harmony. Their album *Songs from the Stoop* nicely exemplifies this unique style while still maintaining a comfort zone for newcomers to the country-bluegrass genre. It's never experimental, but it's always tight. What more could you ask for?

The Brothers Comatose play at 9:30 pm Saturday, Feb. 26, at Sam Bond's; \$5 – *Andy Valentine*

A Thousand Points of Punk

Bruce Hartnell still cuts an imposing figure: tall and beefy with a booming deep voice and hands the size of dinner plates, perpetually dressed in a black T-shirt and black jeans. He's now celebrating his 50th birthday by playing sets with two of his bands, the Detonators and Los Mex Pistols del Norte, along with friends Eugene Pyrate Punx and Camp Fire Punks (two guys from Toad in the Hole doing acoustic bluegrass versions of old punk songs).

As a co-founding owner of the original John Henry's bar and guitarist for political punk band the Detonators, a band he formed in 1979 in Redondo Beach, Hartnell offered an antidote to a music industry plagued by skinny ties and ludicrously tight pants. After the 1983 release of the Detonator's first LP, *Emergency Broadcast Systems*, they opened for the Dead Kennedys, Discharge, Minor Threat, the Misfits, MDC, the Dicks and 45 Grave, among others.

Hartnell relocated the Detonators to Eugene in 1987, and continued for a while before forming Los Mex Pistols del Norte, an instrumental spaghetti western/mariachi band that toured Asia twice. "I had a lot of fun, I got to see the world," he says. "The Detonators were so far underground that you needed a shovel to find it, and the Pistols was my attempt to reach a broader audience and not necessarily be a sell-out. By keeping it instrumental we weren't really trying to push a message, it was purely about the love of the music."

If punk is a young person's game, some people might wince at the thought of Hartnell (who just received his AARP card in the mail) channeling his inner 18 year old. The man himself, though, never lost that anti-authoritarian attitude. "The thing with punk rock is you kind of always believe in it," he says.

Though Hartnell still plays fairly regularly, he can more often be found watching. He admits it's "a huge burden" to plan shows. Still, there's talk of a European tour for The Detonators in the fall. "There's no retirement plan in rock and roll," he says. "You've got to keep going." The Detonators, Los Mex Pistols del Norte, Eugene Pyrate Punx and Camp Fire Punks play at 9 pm Friday, Feb. 25, at Oak Street Speakeasy; donation. – *Vanessa Salvia*

Remembering a Legend

When I think about George Harrison, it takes a few moments to remember why he was so awesome. Then I recall the first time I listened to "Within You Without You," "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "Love You Too." That dude rocked, there's no other way to put it. Not only was he an incredible songwriter – as seemed to be the trend if you were a Beatle – he was by far one of the most innovative musicians of the century. You have to ask yourself, would the Stones' "Paint It Black" be nearly as cool if Brian Jones hadn't heard Harrison's sitar part on "Norwegian Wood?" Probably not.

After George's tragic and untimely death in 2001 – at only 58 – the music world suffered a giant blow not unlike the one in the mid-nineties when Kurt Cobain (at the risk of sounding tactless) bit the bullet, and Jerry Garcia followed only a year later. It's a depressing thing when a musician with such influence dies, like a part of your life is being swept away from you, but it does remind you that music, and therefore his memory, lives on forever. In honoring a fallen artist, nothing is more fitting than a living tribute, and that's just what George is getting.

Cozmik Pizza will ring out Saturday with the legendary music of our pal George with the **George Harrison Tribute Concert**. The event was organized by Rob Tobias of Maya Love – a group that Tobias pulled together in 2005 for George's inaugural local tribute – and the bill also includes Bindaas and the All Things George Choir. The festivities will cover pretty much every era of George Harrison's music – from his years with the Beatles, through his solo career, and everything else he worked on during the years leading up to his death. Adorning these groups is an assortment of local talent, including but not limited to: Rob Tobias, Jerry Zybach, Jeremy Wegner, Larry Lynch, Tim Miller, Sean Brennan and Ankush Vimawalla.

Bindaas is perhaps the most exciting part of the night, as it will be this duo (Wegner, Vimawalla) covering George's apprenticeship under sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar, as well as the rest of Harrison's stint studying the traditions of Indian music. Let's not forget that his time spent soul searching in India eventually gave rise to some of the most innovative and unconventional music of the sixties and decades post.

The All Things George Choir is a choral group that focuses almost exclusively on George Harrison songs, and should prove an interesting highlight as well. It's tough to imagine further innovations being added to George's music, but as long as it's got his style in mind it has to be good.

The most important thing to consider at a tribute show is whether the artist being honored would enjoy it. I'd say George would be down.

The George Harrison Tribute Concert starts at 7 pm Saturday, Feb. 26, at Cozmik Pizza; \$10.

– *Andy Valentine*

