

Attack of the Colorado Mountain Bands

Bringing more classic folk/bluegrass bands to Eugene is like bringing sand to the beach, so it can be easy to burn out on bluegrass in Eugene. But **Head For The Hills** and **Elephant Revival** are worth checking out.

Both bands hail from Colorado and have two studio albums under their belts. Voted Best Bluegrass for 2010 by *Westword Magazine*, the four-piece Head for the Hills has a full festival season booked for the months ahead.

Elephant Revival is said to be creating a new genre of transcendental folk. The quintet mixes old time string band, Celtic influences and good songwriting to create a memorable folkgrass sound, sure to leave you feeling like you've seen more than just another bluegrass band. Head for the Hills and Elephant Revival play at 9 pm Friday, April 8 at the WOW Hall; \$12 adv. \$15 door. – *Bronwynn Manaois*



All Stars of Cuban Musical Heritage

Cuba, the little island that has caused so much political consternation over the past 50 years or so, is a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities, producing music that is rich in both European and African traditions. Cuban music – the sensual interplay of Spanish guitar, African rhythms and European dance forms – is the most popular form of world music since the dawn of the recording industry. Since the 1990s, the **Afro-Cuban All Stars** have become unofficial cultural ambassadors, bridging the divide between the economically and politically isolated island country and the rest of the world. The Grammy-nominated Afro-Cuban All Stars rose to fame with the 1997 album *A Toda Cuba Le Gusta*, recorded at the Buena Vista Social Club Sessions and produced by guitarist Ry Cooder. The ensemble is led by Juan de Marcos González and features a revolving lineup of all-star Cuban musicians, notably Rubén González, Ibrahim Ferrer, Guillermo Rubalcava and Manuel "The Guajiro" Mirabal. The orchestra is devoted to playing and promoting the diverse music of Cuba, incorporating in its sound bolero, chachachá, salsa, son montuno, timba, guajira, danzón, rumba and abakua. Bandleader González also believes in evolving Cuba's musical heritage while honoring its traditions, reflecting contemporary Cuban sounds and using the rotating lineup to represent a diversity of generations and ages ranging from 13 to 81. The Afro-Cuban All Stars play at 7:30 pm Saturday, April 9 at the The Shedd. Ticket prices vary. – *William Kennedy*

Waiting for Morning

From the familiar local voice of **Kathryn Claire** comes the fresh new CD, *Morning Comes Too Soon*. If you're a fan of Irish music, chances are you know Claire from her work with *Circled By Hounds* – she also recorded with popular local Irish band *Toad in the Hole* for its 2004 album *Alleyway Rover*, and in 2003 she released a solo album of music for children called *Kinderqueen*. The Portland-based vocalist and fiddler has a lot of experience as a collaborator and as a solo performer—*Morning Comes Too Soon* follows her previous releases, 2005's *Wanderer* and 2007's *Homespun*.

Unlike Claire's collaborations with musicians in the Irish community, her own albums tend to be more folk oriented. *Morning Comes Too Soon* continues her tradition of personal, reflective music accented by the graceful fiddle playing she is known for.

The album was recorded with Jeff Baxter on piano, Jules Holbrook on bass and Scott MacPhearson on drums, with guest performances from Ezra Holbrook (The Decemberists), Skip Von Kuske (Vagabond Opera, Portland Cello Project), Hanz Araki (Casey Neill), Matthew Hayward-McDonald (Toad in the Hole) and Andrew Lorish (who also co-produced *Morning Comes Too Soon*).

It's hard to decide which is more appealing about Claire's music, her voice, which soars high over everything, or her unique take on the beauty and hardship of daily life. One song, "Tea in the Kitchen," exudes desperation over the loss of a romance and yet she also seems to be holding back her emotions, resulting in a tension that's palpable in the song. Her website says the new album is about themes of "transition, loss and discovery." By the album's gentle wrap-up song "Little Red Bird," she seems to be longing still, as she asks the birds to stay and share their songs. Kathryn Claire and Jonah play at 9 pm Saturday, April 9 at Sam Bond's; \$5. – *Vanessa Salvia*



Get Shponged!

A solemn drumbeat in the distance gradually picks up intensity. An echoing ghostly voice announces that you are spinning into a circular vortex. Multi-colored beams of light seem to be coming at you from all sides. You find yourself feverishly dancing in front of these flashing lights, weird ambient sounds and hypnotic trance beats in a dark sweaty room. This is what it means to be shponged.

Shpongle is a down-tempo psychedelic trance group from the UK formed by Simon Posford and Raja Ram. Their music incorporates a heavy dose of Eastern ethnic instruments, flutes and synthesizer-based psychedelia. In 1996, the duo reportedly witnessed a solar eclipse in India, then rushed into their basement to try to translate that experience into music; this is how Shpongle was born.

The word "shpongle" is not listed in the dictionary, but after you take in one of their high energy, rave-like live performances complete with garishly costumed dancers, the meaning will be clear – and being shponged just got updated.

On April 13, Posford and his Shpongle project will bring the new Shpongletron Experience to the McDonald Theatre. The Shpongletron is an 18-foot tall structure with three screens, a DJ box, wings, two small platforms for dancers, an eye on top and a glow-in-the-dark replica of the Shpongle mask ornamenting the center. But don't worry, the flashing multi-colored lights are still there. The weird audio samples are still there. The hypnotic beats are still there. But now video clips, a reflective azure mask and an even more impressive light show accompany those visceral experiences. Shpongle plays with San Francisco-based *Random Rab* at 7 pm Wednesday, April 13 at the McDonald Theatre; \$18 adv. \$22 door. – *John Locanthi*



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