



The Devil You Know

Since **The Devil Makes Three** released its debut record in 2002, the band has sprouted a following among hipsters, punk rockers and fans of bluegrass old-timey jug bands. That goes to show the cross-genre appeal of this group, deeply rooted in country but not denying its punk rock influences either.

Santa Cruz's The Devil Makes Three is an oddball in the world of folk – a drummerless acoustic trio consisting of two guitarists and a string bass – yet even without a drummer the group manages to add a punk edge with a concrete sense of rhythm. Standup bassist Lucia Turino has said that the band does for American music what the Pogues did for Irish music. If that sounds like a horrible way to ruin bluegrass, think again.

The band has a cohesiveness that comes from years of playing together – guitarist Pete Bernhard and guitarist Cooper McBean first met and began playing punk songs in Vermont in eighth grade. But they're not just cranking out acoustic versions of the three-chord, two-minute blasts that originally defined punk. On the contrary, they're much more in line with the finger-picking style of Mississippi John Hurt, and their twangy, three-part harmonizing recalls the Monroe Brothers more than the Ramones. It's loose and rough around the edges, like back-porch bluegrass should be. Their lyrics give booze and blues and hard luck a bit of grace, and while some of their songs are fairly autobiographical (like "Old Number Seven," an homage to Jack Daniels whiskey, or "Beneath the Piano," about a New Year's party where people, including Bernhard, passed out under a piano) many of them are captivating stories – campfire yarns – sung in a minor chord.

With every song, Bernhard's gritty voice conjures visions of barroom brawlers and whiskey-fueled rebellion of days past. They don't look like hillbillies, though, and they don't play bluegrass like Bill Monroe would have played it, but they certainly inspire as much enthusiastic bass-slappin' and boot-scootin' mayhem as any old-timey band could. Though it took them four years to come up with their latest CD, *Do Wrong Right*, the only thing you could do wrong would be to not go check them out.

The Devil Makes Three plays with Brown Bird 9 pm Saturday, April 23, at the WOW Hall; \$18 adv., \$20 door. – Vanessa Salvia

Incarnations of Jazz

It is easy for quality artists with incredible imagination and immense improvisational skills to get overlooked by those who seek more traditional, popular fare. Pop is short for "popular" for a reason, though the jazz genre and its many talented musicians deserve more recognition than they often receive these days. When promising Northwest artists appear, it's important to make sure you hear about them. **The Joe Freuen Sextet** is one such collection of noteworthy musicians.

Freuen is a rising talent who has shared the stage with the likes of Dave Liebman, backed up the Cherry Poppin' Daddies and performed at legendary clubs like New York City's The Blue Note. His sextet plays a spirited sort of orchestral jazz that will have you dancing to the beats, or at least bopping in your seats.

Tracks like the 10-minute "Barber Moresi" begin and end with the sort of characteristic bombastic flair some traditional orchestra numbers are known for, though in-between these moments the song reveals some jazzy undercurrents. Ditto the groovy "25-24," which features slippery saxophone solos that fly up and down the scales while frenetic drumming keeps things moving right along. "Siamese" is more raucous, with its sections of sustained heavy drumming and dizzying piano, and a trumpet solo halfway through slows things down for a spell before the song's swelling conclusion.

The Joe Freuen Sextet alternates between languid and lively with ease, changing time and mood in a way that feels natural. Its tracks are cohesive and yet imaginative enough to stand on their own, and their complexity is never overwhelming. You will be hard-pressed not to enjoy this incarnation.

The Joe Freuen Sextet plays at 7:30 pm Thursday, April 21, at the Granary; n/c. – Brian Palmer

Orchestral Chamber Pop

Nona Marie Invie's voice has a chilling coo that sits between dark and bright. Regardless, it's beautiful. Her hesitance in speech and unwillingness to disclose the concrete meaning of her lyrics makes her music more poetry than anything else. The Minneapolis quintet, with Invie at its lead, weaves together soft textures of melancholy and longing that often reflect the **Dark Dark Dark** of their name, but that also veers away from gray by opening into a wide spectrum of different colors.

Invie's background in music is similar to that of many young pianists. Learning as a child at her mother's behest and then classically trained, she was left as an adult wanting more than the clinical routine of recitals. Invie quit and picked up the guitar, then relearned the instrument of her youth that now – in combination with cello, banjo, accordion and clarinet – has established the quintet's distinct version of orchestral chamber pop. As brazen as one would assume this band would be, given its combined talent, the lyrics are shrouded in metaphor. Unsure if this veiling is a guard against intrusion or just an artist conscious of partial revelation, Invie's audience is left to decipher her lyrical oddities. "Oh, the unspeakable things," she laments over and over at the end of "Daydreaming." However indistinct they appear, her words blend into heart-wrenching ballads that need no explanation.

Dark Dark Dark plays at 9:30 pm Saturday, April 23, at Sam Bond's Garage; \$8. – Andrew Hitz



Garage A Trois

Sexy Punkalectic Jazz Skronk

When a band is called **Garage A Trois**, the sex metaphors kind of write themselves. And with a sound like theirs, those metaphors are almost irresistible. These guys produce jazz, funk and psychedelic rock in an intoxicated orgy, and in this three-way nobody ends up feeling awkward or left out.

Garage A Trois is a super group of contemporary jazz-funksters. Skonkin' on the saxophone is Skerik, known for his work in Critters Buggin' and with Les Claypool (Frog Brigade, Les Claypool's Fancy Band). On drums is Stanton Moore of Galactic. On keyboards is Marco Benevento of the Benevento Russo Duo. On vibraphone is Mike Dillon (Critters Buggin', Les Claypool's Fancy Band), who is known for his work with Ani Difranco and Karl Denson's Tiny Universe.

Garage A Trois is coming through Eugene in support of their 2011 release, *Always Be Happy, But Stay Evil*, out on Potato Family Records. They sometimes get lumped in with the jam band scene, though they transcend that genre in many ways. Live, the band attacks with the intensity of a Bebop musician on junk – updating jazz into a funky amalgam of angular, glitchy and twitchy techno beats with melodies that build upon themselves, exploding at times into the spiritual exultation of Coltrane or an experimental jazz-rock ruckus.

Garage-a-trois plays at 9 pm Thursday, April 21, at Sam Bond's Garage; \$12. – William Kennedy