

Go Out Gunning With Los Mex Pistols

The Cinco de Mayo holiday, Spanish for “fifth of May,” celebrates the Mexican Army’s unlikely victory over French forces that outnumbered them two to one at the Battle of Puebla on that date in 1862. Cinco de Mayo has been celebrated in Puebla ever since, though over the past 149 years we in the United States have made more of a big deal out of it.

One local band has helped us celebrate, both locally and abroad, since 1996. **Los Mex Pistols del Norte** are the perfect band to see play on this date. Their inspired combo of traditional pasodobles (music played at bullrings to reward the participants of the bullfight), Tejana, conjunto, banda, ranchera, norteño, Ennio Morricone spaghetti Western instrumentals, and surf rock riffs bridge the borderlands between our two cultures.

A fixture at such festivals as Fiesta Latina, Los Mex Pistols appeal to young and old alike. They’re so good that they’ve even won battle of the band competitions, winning out over other authentic Latino bands. The band, at times composed of a dozen or so members all playing various traditional instruments (guitarronne, mandolin, accordions, trumpets, sousaphone, tympanis, concert chimes), has opened for several Grammy award-winning acts, including Los Lobos, Flaco Jimenez, Ozomatli and the Neville Brothers, as well as local faves Pink Martini, surf guitar legend Dick Dale, rockabilly great The Reverend Horton Heat and songwriter Jonathan Richman. The band has inspired so much loyalty among its audiences that a fan from Denver who heard Los Mex Pistols play even paid their way to Singapore in 2004, after he moved there to open that country’s first microbrew pub.

Though the music may be a hybrid, the one thing that everybody who hears it gets out of it is that it’s music for dancing. So whether you toss back tequila or you’re a teetotaler, whether you rock cowboy boots or Doc Martens, you’ll love Los Mex Pistols. Los Mex Pistols del Norte, Campfire Punks, the Ego Tones play at 9 pm Thursday, May 5, at Oak Street Speakeasy. Donation.
– Vanessa Salvia

¡Tiempo de Fiesta!

The Vet’s Club Ballroom will celebrate its annual Cinco de Mayo bash on Thursday, May 5, and it should be a night to remember. The headlining act this year is **El Combo de la Salsa**, an eight-piece salsa band that cut its teeth locally, both here in Eugene and up in Portland. The band contains elements that remain essential to the composition and flavor of authentic Latin music: guitar, trumpet, baby bass, trombone, congas, timbales, saxophone and, of course, high-energy vocalization. El Combo is renowned for its ability to get people swingin’, so for those who love to dance this is a part of the night well worth checking out.

Other attractions at the fiesta include free dance lessons, a silent auction, appearances from **DJ Mario Mora** between performance sets, Salsa performances by the **Eugene Casineros** – a locally based social dance and demonstrative group – and further dance displays by Javier and Adha of **Gemini Salsa** in Portland.

Aside from being a raging party, the night aims to be a boon for the community: All proceeds will go toward benefitting the work that the folks at Centro LatinoAmericano have strived to perform since 1972. Centro is a not-for-profit agency that works tirelessly with its advocacy of Latino empowerment across Lane County, as well as providing human services to benefit not only the Latino community but also the Lane County community as a whole.

So whether your goal is just to dance, or if it’s to help the community you live in, the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration at the Vet’s Club Ballroom is a must visit. Olé!

The celebration kicks off 8 pm Thursday, May 5, at the Vet’s Club Ballroom; \$10.
– Andy Valentine



RJD2



A-Trak

Join the Mallard Mania

Several of the University of Oregon’s signature spring events are being combined this year into a five-day celebration of music, art and culture. The ASUO (Associated Students of the University of Oregon), the Jewish Student Union and the Cultural Forum present the first-ever **Mallard Madness** festival May 4th through the 8th at the UO. The event brings together the ASUO’s biannual Street Faire, the Willamette Valley Music Festival and the KWVA Campus Radio birthday party.

The idea to join forces came about from the Jewish Student Union. The objective was to bring a concert featuring big-name acts to campus and build a sense of community among students outside of sporting events. The ASUO quickly came on board with the proposal. ASUO Outreach Coordinator Brian Allen told the *Oregon Daily Emerald*, “We looked at football games as a unifying event, but it seemed to come out of aggression, like ‘let’s beat the other team.’”

One of the free events is the Street Faire. It’s the most visible contribution the ASUO makes to campus life, and it happens twice a year in the fall and spring. This time the event will feature more than 70 local vendors, as well as music acts like well-known a cappella groups **Divisi** and **On the Rocks**. The spring edition of the Street Faire takes place on 13th Avenue from 9 am to 5 pm Wednesday, May 4th to the 7th.

In addition, **KWVA Campus Radio** is holding its annual birthday concert at the EMU Amphitheatre Friday, May 6. In years past KWVA has held this celebration downtown at the WOW Hall. This year the birthday festivities feature **RJD2**. Born in Eugene and now residing in Philadelphia, RJD2 is one of the biggest names in underground hip-hop. He’s known for his largely instrumental and atmospheric work for labels such as Definitive Jux and XL Recordings, but is now putting out his stuff on his own label.

The crown jewel of Mallard Madness is the **Willamette Valley Music Festival**. Formerly known as the Willamette Valley Folk Festival, the event has broadened its scope in recent years to include artists from the worlds of rock and hip hop. This year the event features a variety of local and nationally known acts on four stages with styles spanning from belly dance, roots music, indie rock, electronic music and hip hop. Included in this year’s amazing selection of artists are rising hip-hop superstar **Donnis**, atmospheric glitch-hopper **Baths**, indie-darlings **Yeasayer** and hip hop/techno **DJ A-Trak**.

For a complete list of events go to www.uomallardmadness.com. Free. – William Kennedy



Baths



Donnis



Yeasayer



Carlile Plays The Shedd

Brandi Carlile is a bitchin’ performer. If there’s any doubt about this, one need only give a listen to her latest release, *Live at Benaroya Hall with the Seattle Symphony*, to see how skilled, passionate and soulful this indie rocker is. It doesn’t matter if she and her band are playing her own tunes or having the balls to cover iconic tunes that most artists have no business covering; Carlile’s shows stand out because one minute she infuses her tracks with the kind of edge that bites and the next she can turn it down and play up a fine melody or vocal. It’s a simultaneously brash and lovely display of variety.

There is no shortage of good tunes on this live album, and this due as much to Carlile and her band as it is to the seamless way the Seattle Symphony’s performance melds into the tracks, neither overwhelming the other musicians nor being drowned out by them. Carlile channels her inner Melissa Etheridge on rockers like “Dreams” and “Before it Breaks,” but the symphony keeps up with her every move and augments each performance very well. And though every song on the recording isn’t exactly a good idea – Carlile isn’t kidding when she calls her bandmates’ cover of “The Sound of Silence” beautiful but creepy too, it is – the results are often mesmerizing, as on the album’s obligatory audience participation track “Turpentine.”

Carlile wears her heart on her sleeve, never bothering to restrain her emotions when singing, and this gives her songs a spine-tingling flair. She might not have a symphony with her when she comes to Eugene, but the show will probably be fit for a symphony nonetheless.

Brandi Carlile plays 7:30 pm Friday, May 6, at the Shedd Institute; \$26-\$36. – Brian Palmer