

Fresh and Familiar

Kina Grannis might not be the most original artist in the world, but her music is so enjoyable you might not care. A number of her ditties are about the idyllic love most people long for but rarely experience. While it's the sort of thing you've heard hundreds of times before – mostly from other young female artists whose songs target the same twenty-somethings that Grannis's work aims for – it sounds a lot less vapid coming from her. The fact is Grannis can put a fresh spin on the familiar.

On multiple occasions her Ingrid Michaelson influence is more than a little eerie ("The One You Say Goodnight To" will make you think you're listening to a kissing cousin of Michaelson's hit "The Way I Am," right down to the hand claps and the vocals), the semi-acoustic sound of most of her songs is reminiscent of Colbie Caillat.

Grannis is a winning performer because her easygoing songs have a depth and genuineness to them that will draw you in every time – even if it's to a place you're sure you've seen somewhere before.

Kina Grannis plays 7 pm Thursday, May 12, at Prince Lucien Campbell Hall; \$6-12.

– Brian Palmer

Whiskey Country

Hayes Carll's honky tonk-alt country sound is just as comfortable coming out of the speakers of my crunchy granola Subaru as it is blaring from the cracked dash of my Ford 4x4 truck. He packed Sam Bond's on his last visit to Eugene with hula hoopers, a couple hipsters, a few guys who pulled up on their motorcycles and a general miscellany of folks like me who listen to that far-ranging mix of music that falls under the heading of "Americana," which encompasses acts from Kasey Chambers to The Jayhawks.

On May 17 Carll comes to the WOW Hall with his new album *KMAG YOYO* – a military acronym for "Kiss my ass guys, you're on your own." Carll previewed a couple of new songs at his September 2010 Eugene show, like the drunk Democrat meets equally three-sheets-to-the-wind Ann Coulter-esque rightwing hottie duet "Another Like You" ("You're probably a Democrat/Well what the hell is wrong with that?/Nothing if you're Taliban") to appreciative whoops, hollers and attempts at two-stepping.

The album's title track adds a little surf rock to the country sound and in the tradition of another of my alt country heroes who frequently comes through Eugene – James McMurtry – "KMAG YOYO" is an anti-war commentary with lines like, "Woke up in a firefight/tripping from the morphine ... God don't let me die here/I ain't even 19," about a drugged out soldier struck by an IED. When lanky, laidback Carll draws the line, it's as rhymey and danceable as it is depressing.

KMAG YOYO is as politically impudent and lyrically clever as Carll's 2008 album *Trouble in Mind* and its acclaimed by some and condemned by others song "My Girlfriend Left Me for Jesus." Though, sadly, there are fewer songs about whiskey, Carll's voice on this album is no less shaded with tones of bourbon and Texas.

Hayes Carll, with opener Quiet Life, plays the WOW Hall 8 pm Tuesday, May 17; \$12 adv., \$14 door. – Camilla Mortensen



JAMES MINCHIN

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