



Universal Appeal

Those who stayed somewhat sober at the Slightly Stoopid show in July at the Cuthbert might do a double take at this year's Eugene Celebration when **Karl Denson's Tiny Universe** (KDTU) hits the stage.

KDTU is, of course, led by the same Karl Denson who accompanied Slightly Stoopid on a number of tour dates this summer, including a stop in Eugene. An accomplished saxophonist, flutist and vocalist, Denson became well known for his work with Lenny Kravitz during Kravitz's first two studio albums. While Denson's appearances over the years with Kravitz, Blackalicious, Michael Franti & Spearhead and The Allman Brothers may seem to indicate otherwise, Denson's career path has moved mostly through various iterations of jazz.

In the early 1990s, funk-jazz/self-styled "boogaloo" group The Greyboy Allstars grew out of a collaboration between Denson and DJ Greyboy.

Fred Wesley, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette and Galactic's Stanton Moore are among the musicians Denson has recorded with.

Yet, as his groove-heavy work with the Greyboy Allstars and KDTU attests, Denson is not the kind of jazzman who considers himself to be playing "dinner" or "sit-down" music – rather, Denson plays, and plays hard, precisely because he wants his listener to move.

In a recent telephone interview, Denson made clear distinctions between The Greyboy Allstars and KDTU. Describing The Greyboy Allstars as being jazzy and composed of "strong players," Denson allowed that KDTU, which now features guitarist DJ Williams of the DJ Williams Projekt, is "a stronger band altogether." Denson also praised the Eugene area, which he has visited many times, as a place that he loves well enough to imagine living here.

If you're a frequent concertgoer in Eugene, then you know how it feels to watch a band play a show between shows: that sort of disinterested, dispiriting performance that reminds us local yokels that we are indeed a convenient, mid-week stopping-off point between San Francisco and Seattle. Expect precisely the opposite kind of experience from Denson and KDTU – and please, for the love of God, Buddha, Allah, etc., bring your dancing shoes.

KDTU plays 7 pm Friday, Aug. 26, on the KLCC stage of the Eugene Celebration. – *Ulrick Casimir*



Auto-Punk Power Trio

They could sound like every other indie punk band with whiny, self-loathing lyrics accompanied by a musical accent striving to live on the edge of upbeat rock 'n' roll. Yet **The Thermals** tend to take the stage with a bit more finesse.

Commonly known as the "power trio," Hutch Harris (guitar/vocals), Kathy Foster (bass/vocals) and Westin Glass (drums/vocals) brought simple chords and fast downstrokes straight into the hearts of an entire generation. Birthed in 2002 in the hipster-ridden city of Portland, this post-pop punk band embed every lyric, note and melody with a hint of anarchy, along with the conventional punk acumen that suggests you need a cigarette and more holes in your jeans. Hell, Harris recorded The Thermals' first album on a 4-track cassette in the kitchen of his own home, and he has a reputation for erratic stage presence while stripping down to his skivvies in front of a crowd.

Spewing political antics, questioning religion, enduring unrequited love and facing the tyrannical rule of America as well as its inevitable downfall, all are reoccurring affairs in The Thermal's teen angst sound. Who knew that all a band had to do to bag three European tours was sing through the nose about thoughts and doubts all human beings possess, throw in some really loud drums and find the spunk to earn a kick-ass fan base? And, by discovering a fourth chord in the pop-buzz arsenal (F sharp minor), The Thermals became gods of auto-punk.

The Thermals play 11 pm Saturday, Aug. 27, on the EW Stage at the Eugene Celebration. – *Dakota Haugen*

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