

Devilishly Rhythmic, Deliciously Cultured

The Grateful Dead had members just like any other band, and they were all just as human as you or me. Yeah, maybe the Dead's been placed on a proverbial pedestal over the course of the last half-century or so, but that doesn't mean we should forget the people who made that music possible. Among them, of course, is one part of the dynamic percussion section that pushed the Grateful Dead that extra mile – **Mickey Hart**.

Despite being an integral part of what was possibly the most highly regarded jam band of all time, Hart has tried his best to step out of the Grateful Dead's shadow and into the light. He's certainly still got the drum chops that made him famous, and much of his solo work alongside the other members of the Mickey Hart Band is rhythmically based as a result. Sadly, it seems as though there's an unwitting agreement between a lot of the ex-Dead members and their fans to recognize the Grateful Dead only as fuel for tribute bands, but if there's a guy to shift this paradigm, it's probably going to be Hart.

Since the Grateful Dead, he's put a lot of effort into discovering new, unique percussion sounds – many of them exotic and found exclusively in other cultures – and these sounds have ignited a fire for the world in his belly. Hart's work discovering and comprehending other cultures through music has been recognized by some of the major forces in history and preservation. So, from drugs and rock 'n' roll to collaborations with the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian, I guess you could say Hart's just about done it all. The truth is, though, if you're looking for a long jamming, deliciously drum-heavy hippie sweat-shower this week, then you're looking for Mickey Hart.

The Mickey Hart Band plays 7 pm, Wednesday, Nov. 30, at McDonald Theatre; \$25 adv., \$30 door.
– *Andy Valentine*



The Technique of Change

Immortal Technique is in the middle of a raging, tumultuous battle. He has no record label, no corporate sponsorship, no obligations or accountability to anyone besides himself and his fans. He says what he wants, when he wants to. And what he usually has to say are the kinds of things that start revolutions. That renders him a few enemies (like the U.S. government). But as the frailty and tenuousness of what we in America know as the First Amendment or "Freedom of Speech" becomes more and more evident it seems that now is Technique's time to enlighten the masses. And that's exactly what he's been doing.

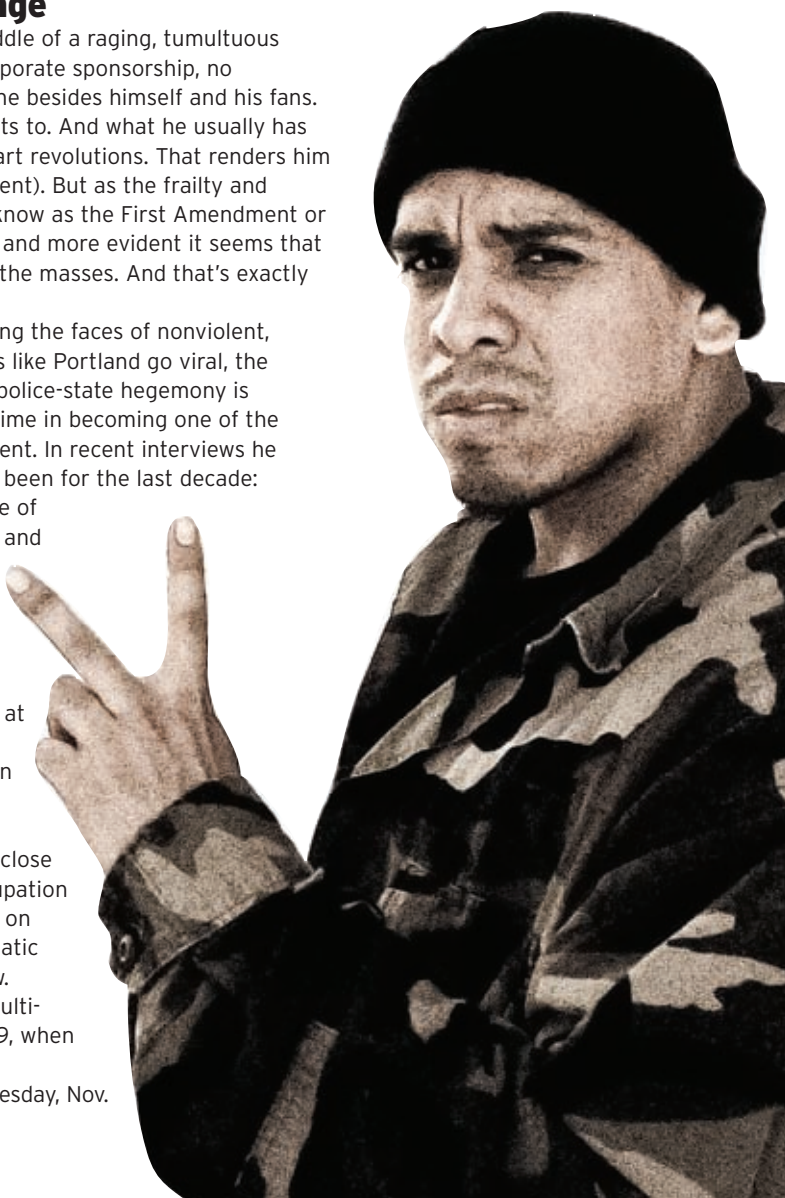
As images of police pepper spraying the faces of nonviolent, peaceful protesters in "liberal" places like Portland go viral, the reality of a well-fortified, aggressive police-state hegemony is exposed and Technique's wasted no time in becoming one of the spokespeople for the Occupy movement. In recent interviews he preaches the same ideas that he has been for the last decade: denouncing our overwhelming culture of imperialism, the rule of the 1 percent and bolstering our dire need for positive social change. Of his recent tour supporting his new (and free) album *The Martyr* Technique told *EW* that, "The momentum on tour has been very powerful from the several stops at Occupy sites to the wild shows, the energy level hasn't dissipated at all. In fact, it's just gotten stronger and stronger as we stay on the road."

The album's thematic focus stays close to home, covering topics like US occupation of foreign nations and shedding light on ideas that corporate execs and dogmatic politicians wouldn't want you to know.

Don't miss Technique at the UO Multicultural Center 4 pm Tuesday, Nov. 29, when speaks on hip hop and activism.

Immortal Technique plays 9 pm Tuesday, Nov. 29, at WOW Hall; \$18 adv., \$20 door.

– *Andrew Hitz*



Straight out of Saskatoon

When discussing certain bands, the term roots music becomes a redundancy – geography and sound are inextricable, and each native note seems to bloom from the soil of a given place/name. The land itself seems to sing. You can't listen to early R.E.M. without picturing the kudzu-covered South, and you can't hear Lucinda Williams without smelling the heat rise off Houston asphalt. Similarly, the eerie harmonies and lunar melodies of **The Deep Dark Woods** whisper of the vast, land-locked prairies and boreal forests of the band's home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The band's music, full of brushed rhythms and country twang, evoke the alienation and dark descents into heartbreak and breakdown.

Like The Deep Dark Woods' fellow countryman Neil Young, the group taps into a species of Americana that sounds more authentic than a dozen contemporary bands garnering that same label. Fragile, keening vocals, slow-plucked banjo, swampy percussion and an aura of Appalachian gospel work together to evoke the deep, murky history of the West. On "Charlie's (Is Coming Down)," the single that won CBC's Great Canadian Song Quest, the band lays down a vintage blues riff while singer/guitarist Ryan Boldt croons a sad tale of loss and decay: "This whole world has got me down, all these places have hit the ground, so let's buy another round, before Charlie's crumbles down..."

The Deep Dark Woods' latest album, *The Place I Left Behind*, is a collection of songs as completely rooted in time and space as *Harvest* or *Music from Big Pink*. On the opener, "Westside Street," the gorgeous melodies and richly textured musicianship belie Boldt's lament about "this town of misery." Songs like "The Place I Left Behind," "Mary's Gone" and "Oh, What a Life" are tinged around the edges like an old photograph; they sound like they might have been written in the bunkhouses of the Hudson Bay Company. The Deep Dark Woods mine a similar territory as the Avett Brothers, though the group possesses a more vintage sound; where the Avetts gild their mountain music with a thoroughly modern sensibility, Deep Dark Woods create a grittier, grimmer version of folk/country that haunts the present like ghost.

The Deep Dark Woods play 8:30 pm Wednesday, Nov. 30, at John Henry's; \$5 adv., \$6 door. – *Rick Levin*