

## Don't Call It a Comeback

They've been here for years, and as a duo they never really broke up. Life and the music industry just pulled Lateef the Truthspeaker and Lyrics Born in different directions – for a while. But what did you expect from these emcees, both of whom began as solo artists and originally ended up collaborating by accident with DJ Shadow and Chief Xcel (of Blackalicious) to form **Latyrx**?

Fourteen years after these guys released *Latyrx* (the album), the emcees of Latyrx are back in action together.

"What we've talked about is, very simply, picking up where we left off," says Lyrics Born.

Though not aged enough to be oldies but goodies, Lateef the Truthspeaker and Lyrics Born crashed onto the hip hop scene circa 2000, in the company of such peers as Anti-Pop Consortium, Pigeon John and Aesop Rock. And like the aforementioned artists of underground hip hop's past, the Latyrx emcees are weirdos who specialize in abstract lyrics, bizarre content and unapologetic hyper creativity.

Songs like "Lady Don't Tek No," "Balcony Beach" and "The Quickening" aptly display the style and ability of Latyrx. The duo feeds off each other and will most likely appear in a brazen new form when it comes to live performance.

Rumors of a new album in the works are all over the internet, and hip hop heads continue to rave and rally behind the idea of more Latyrx to come. Don't miss out on Latyrx, hitting Eugene for the first time since 2001.

Latyrx plays 8:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 1, at WOW Hall; \$13 adv., \$15 door. – *Dante Zuñiga-West*



## The Electronic Vanguard

Hey kids, do you like stylists? Do you want to hear a stylish glitch and mix hybrids of pirated half-second spots that sound an awful lot like all the other dub-house-hip-pop-hop-step-squawk that's selling out electronica shows throughout the country these days?

Not to say that it's bad, because acts like **Michal Menert** (pictured) and **Gramatik** of the Pretty Lights label will elicit all sorts of swerving, pumping, thumping, stepping, humping and just straight-up dancing from everyone who attends their shows. But it's tell-tale to see growing homogenization of subterranean music.



Of course, popularity has something to do with it. Take underground hip hop of yesteryear: All the best parts of all the best tracks with all the best rhymes with all the important shit to say was pretty well-received by anybody who listened to it. Then it got widespread, slightly diluted and backhanded by the mainstream labels. This new rave of electronica may be reaching that breaking point (pun intended).

Nonetheless, the ease with which decades of music are repainted, harassed and made to do things they were never intended to do remains stunning. And it sounds good. And it feels good. And the lights are good. And the bass is good. And I want to contort my body. And so do lots of other people – and that's the idea. You can't listen to Gramatik's *Dimestore Diamond Remix* and not want to boogie. Menert's style, though jazzier, carries with it that same vibe.

Fortunately, independent labels like Pretty Lights are still putting out independent music (for free online). It's just that what they're putting out may no longer be the cultural spearhead it once was. But hey, it's a fast-paced party, and Michal Menert and Gramatik are two artists who can surely keep up with the tempo.

Michal Menert and Gramatik play 8 pm Friday, Dec. 9, at McDonald Theatre; \$15 adv., \$20 door. – *Patrick Newson*

## The Postmodern Lover

The intimacy of the small wood-grain stage at Sam Bond's suits **Jonathan Richman** like warm wool herringbone on a cold rainy evening. Richman offers a casual medley of soft acoustic waves with a bittersweet undertow and his longtime partner in chime, Tommy Larkin, spits back a suave spray of minimalist jazz drumming. Often singing in French or Spanish, Richman comes across as a troubadour philosopher concerned with affectation, affection, aesthetics and mortality.

His most recent album, *O, Moon, Queen of Night on Earth*, from 2010, channels the old romantic vanguard suffering through the wee small hours of a starry night with nothing but nylon strings and a long sense of humor. Songs like "These Bodies that Came to Cavort" and "My Affected Accent" pulse upbeat despair about problems like too much wine, not enough bullying as a child and using big words inappropriately. "If You Want to Leave Our Party Just Go" invites a crowd-pleasing meta-farce, and "I Was the One She Came For" offers a sweet double-entendre in an otherwise heart-felt love song. Nonetheless, Richman's dark lyric depth is apparent despite his wit, and he plumbs it in "The Sea Was Calling Me Home."

Onstage, Richman and Larkin (the Greek Chorus from *There's Something About Mary*), provide running commentary, spontaneous dance routines, eclectic arrangement and the energy drawn up from their proto-punk new-wave taproots. Though never classically "famous," Richman is certainly a velvet hero among those who thrive underground.

Jonathan Richman plays 9:30 pm Saturday, Dec. 3, at Sam Bond's Garage; \$14. – *Patrick Newson*



PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

## Stomp At Sam Bond's

Puting about the loss of Portland-based trance hillbilly blues band Hillstomp? Stop sulking. Hillstomp's frontmen may have disembarked on separate projects, but in so doing they continue to go off in the ways that made them a Eugene favorite for dancing your ass off to. **Henry Hill Kammerer**, the singer/guitar playing half of Hillstomp, plays Sam Bond's Dec. 1 with **Bitterroot** and **Kory Quinn and the Comrades**.

Portland might be a long way from the musical inspirations of the American South, but something about throwing in a little Pendleton plaid and the Cascade peaks instead of the gently rolling mountains of Appalachia adds a twist to the sound that's both Northwest unique and distinctly Americana. From Kammerer's twanging and yelling to Bitterroot's eastern Oregon open-spaces influenced sound and Kory Quinn's train-hopping hobo blues, if you're in the mood for dancing and getting sweaty on a cold December night, then you're good to go. Kammerer on his own provides enough stomp and holler to give you the bluegrass fix you're looking for.

If you're planning on dancing (and even if you're not because trust me, you will dance) you may want to bring a towel to wipe your sweat. Note to that lady with the low-cut shirt at the last Sam Bond's Hillstomp show: Grabbing a beery bar towel to wipe your chest with and then tossing it back on the bar got you covered in beer, got the towel covered in your sweat and got anyone who witnessed your wiping a little grossed out. Luckily we were too busy dancing Mississippi trance blues to care.

Kory Quinn, Henry Kammerer and Bitterroot play Thursday, Dec. 1, at Sam Bond's; \$9. – *Camilla Mortensen*