

## Electronic Gypsy-Hop

**Beats Antique** is a band that tills the grains of dance with sounds sifting seamlessly through Eastern strings, hip-hop drums and West Coast electronica.

Since forming Beats Antique in San Francisco in 2007, David Satori, Tommy Cappel and Zoe Jakes have discovered a niche in their audience of burners, learners and festival-heads. Both Satori and Cappel are classically trained musicians steeped in global jazz, blues, folk and beats from West Africa to Serbia, from Bali to the Bay. Jakes, a world-renowned belly-ballet-tipsy-gypsy dancer, adds an elegant and spicy element to this triumvirate.

Produced with live and digital synthstruments, Beats Antique's 2011 release *Elektrafone* is an album of escalated algorithms. Blended, suspended and rendered to eclection, tracks like "Alto" swagger through glitchy streets and pumpy breaks, while songs like "The Porch" integrate plucky acoustic strings, horns and tambourines into the clown-fun medley of beat-blues and rocking-chair stomp.

Impressive festival chops and dirty passports fuel these performers' unique fusion of bop and collage, paste and smear. Live instrumentation, samples, rich tympanic percussion and belly dancing define the group's onstage presentation. Beats Antique is a dance-trance carriage drawn by mechanical bulls – buy the ticket and take the ride – dancing shoes mandatory, blinking gloves optional.

Beats Antique plays 8 pm Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the McDonald Theatre; \$20 adv., \$25 door.

– Patrick Newson



## Chambergrass Champs

Robert Sherwood (mandolin, vocals, guitar), August Dennis (bass), Marisa Korth (vocals, guitar) and Carlo Canlas (violin, vocals) are the musicians who make up **Backwater Opera** – a group that stitches the sound of bluegrass music into a classical indie-rock tapestry. It's an aesthetic the band calls "chambergrass."

Take the mournful ballads of The Civil Wars, the nostalgic warmth of Nickel Creek's music, the eerie innovations of The Greencards' tunes and then put a classical spin on it all. What you'd get is a stoic, old-timey, twanged-out sound with cinematic lyrics and a standstill vibe. That's what Backwater Opera's chambergrass sounds like.

Hailing from Denton, Texas, and having come together only two years ago at the University of North Texas, the band cut its teeth performing free concerts outside an old courthouse in Denton town square (a monthly practice the group proudly continues). "Really, we've become classical mixed with bluegrass and an element of folk," says Korth, as the band's tour vehicle careens toward the Oregon Coast to yet another gig.

Seasoned, hungry and focused, coming off a first-place win at Arizona's "Pickin' in the Pines Bluegrass and Acoustic Music Festival," Backwater Opera is poised to push chambergrass up and down the West Coast. With songs ranging from sorrowful to blisteringly introspective, and vocal harmonies sweet enough to melt even the harshest Pacific Northwest ice, this band is one to keep in mind and on the playlist.

Backwater Opera plays 8 pm Friday, Jan. 20, at the Axe & Fiddle in Cottage Grove; \$5. – Dante Zufiga-West

## Whiskey-Punk Blues

There's a rough and rugged synergy going on in Portland. This synergy is between two musical factions that you'd never think would combine forces. It blends the grungiest corners of the urban jungle with the "just-don't-give-a-fuck" contingent of the Northwest backwoods. It's jug band, it's folk punk, rockabilly, punk blues, cowpunk and psychobilly. Call it whatever suits your fancy, 'cause by the time the corn whiskey hits your bloodstream it'll all blend together seamlessly.

Bands like Devil Makes Three from Santa Cruz, Hillstomp from Portland, and Chet Weise from The Immortal Lee County Killers have helped meld influences that span from Jerry Lee Lewis and R. L. Burnside to Captain Beefhart. But perhaps no group has perfected this upbeat, raspy string twang like Portland's **Sassparilla**. Dusty as hell and cranked up for your dancing convenience, the band sounds like it just hopped off a train from some far-away Southern town where harmonicas play late into the night and a jug of home-stilled moonshine on the front porch is denoted as hospitality. Sassparilla is an ether huff, a whiskey chase, an all-out assault of punk-jug slam.

When frontman Gus Blackwell straddles the stage with a steel resonator guitar, apt fedora and a can of Pabst Blue Ribbon close at hand, genres collide.

Sassparilla plays 9 pm Friday, Jan. 20, at Sam Bond's; \$5. – Andrew Hitz





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