

Alice in Download Land

Although **Moonalice** is a fairly new band, having had its first concert in 2007, the group is composed of old pros who have been making music for a long time with rock 'n' roll legends, including Rod Stewart, Jefferson Airplane and The Grateful Dead.

One of the most essential members of the band is Pete Sears, whose repertoire includes playing accordion, bass, guitar, keyboards and vocals. When Sears isn't laying down the bass line, he's playing guitar – lending his youthful voice to old classics. Whether he's singing a folk-rock tune or crooning a love song to the audience, Sears is extremely diverse in his talents and always puts on a good show.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a band as accessible as Moonalice – a five-piece that not only puts its albums online for free, but also does live "Mooncasts" of every one of its concerts. Moonalice also created a band-operated, satellite-based HTML system that allows all of its concerts to be broadcasted to smart phones and iPads. The group's ingenuity has served them well, as Moonalice has recently been recognized by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for having the first platinum single ever to be downloaded from a band's own servers.

Moonalice plays 8 pm Sunday, May 13, at WOW Hall; \$18 adv., \$20 door.

– Hailey Chamberlain

Cottage Grove's Steampunk Cabaret

A week ago I met a girl on the side of the road. She was a radical-anarchist type with black skinny jeans, a half-shaved head and a few well-manicured hairs growing off her chin. We struck up a conversation, which eventually turned to music, she being a saw player.

"I fucking hate folk-punk," she said. "It's all the same. Just go up to FolkLife in Seattle and they'll all be lined up and down the street with their guitars, banjos, washboards and fiddles all playing the same Tom Waits rip-off about train-hopping, dumpster-diving, drinking shitty whiskey and loitering."

I'm pretty sure some of that criticism was self-deprecation, but what she spoke of had much truth to it. The washed-up traveler (skinny mongrel in tow) has become as loathed an archetype as your modern day Ray-Ban-clad hipster or Deadhead pot-smoking hippy. And for good reason – they're all dead ends for civilization. But **Aeon Now!** is the light at the end of the folk-punk tunnel.

An amalgam of visual artists, thespians and long-time musicians, Cottage Grove's Aeon Now! is a psychedelic schlitzy waltz through Alice's Wonderland. It's a tea party fueled by whiskey and steam. Dirges like "My Clock Explodes (When I'm Alone)" find lead vocalist and squeezebox extraordinaire Olive Delsol hurling all her raspy, gutter-soaked energy and raunchy theatrics at the crowd. And like a band of Victorian ragdolls, this cabaret takes you on a trip that spans from gripping punk to theater of the insane.

Think of a downized gulag-esqe Vagabond Opera and that puts you pretty close to what Aeon Now! sounds like. Spin that with a few concepts like community, radical social change and Mutual Aid, and you're about dead on. Put on your boots – maybe even a petticoat or a pocket watch – throw down a shot or two of distilled grain ferment and you're ready to hit the floorboards.

Aeon Now! plays with Mood Area 52 and Strangled Darlings 9 pm Thursday, May 10, at Sam Bond's; \$1-\$5. – Andrew Hitz



Beards, Brothers, Banjos, Bluegrass

Maybe it's the fact that they got their start as dirty travelers busking all over the globe (Australia, et al); maybe it's because they all have similar, somewhat muddy tastes in folk music; maybe it's the fact that they're constantly commuting between Portland and Eugene to continue their musical lifestyles. Whatever the cause, local folkers **Wainwright Brothers** encapsulate a truckin' vagabond sound with perfection. And it makes you want to stomp your feet until the bottom falls out of Sam Bond's.

"Indie roots, bluegrass inspired, boot-stomping are our main self-descriptors," says banjo player Dylan Macnab, and he's right, for all intents and purposes: The band's tunes range from silk to sandpaper, each one a mystery waiting to be unraveled until the vocals come in. But whether the singing sounds like a fierce Tom Waits impression or a strange Harry McClintock at age 20, it's never a let down – just know that you won't be getting your usual dose of bluegrass out of these kids. Spearheaded by Macnab's banjo twang, the instrumentation is as dusty as a southern broom and rugged as the beards the band members sport. But the songwriting is inherently modern, and this lends the Brothers their toe-tapping idiosyncrasy. They'll probably make you wish you knew how to dance, but then you'll realize you don't need formal training; expressing yourself is fun enough.

After almost a five-month hiatus (during which percussionist/guitarist Will Glaser was abroad), the Brothers are reuniting to what will hopefully be a welcoming crowd in the town that knows them best. Erin Howe (of Bad Mitten Orchestre) joins the fellas on fiddle and she's got just the right measure of savage violin skill to make the folk go down like whiskey – smooth, but with an intoxicating burn.

The Wainwright Brothers and Montana Skies play 9 pm Wednesday, May 16, at Sam Bond's; \$1-\$5 door. – Andy Valentine



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