

**Jon Wayne Brings Redemption Reggae**

If you've ever wondered what would've happened to Sublime had lead singer Bradley Nowell survived his deadly dance with heroin, I have the answer. It's in Minneapolis-based reggae/ska/dub trio **Jon Wayne and the Pain**.

Recovering addict Jon Wayne leads the group, and the back story of this Midwesterner's struggle with addiction reveals commonality with Nowell as well as a peek inside the band's moniker. Hint: It has less to do with clown-faced serial killers or grizzled cowboys and more to do with a former drug addict and the pain experienced while trying to claw his way to redemption.

Luckily, redemption has shone its light on Wayne, drummer Tito Miller and bassist Chuck Torgerson. Their message is a positive one, breaking free of the drug-focused stereotypes often associated with reggae music.

Formed by Wayne and former drummer Chris Hicks in 2005, the group recorded and released its eponymous debut album in 2008, after the addition of Torgerson. For them, the responsibility of spreading positive vibes through music is paramount, and the trio often squeezes in 20 shows per month in Minnesota and beyond.

Last year saw the release of the band's second full-length, *Follow Through*, a 12-track effort that includes guest spots from reggae/ska peers Slightly Stoopid, Christofer "C Money" Welter, Daniel "DELA" Cruz, Oguer "OG" Ocon and Yoni.

The album opens with "Vibe," a tune set amidst the sound of gentle waves; I braced myself for the voice of Jack Johnson, but was instead pleasantly serenaded by the earnest voice of Wayne telling me he would "rather bleed and die than be superficialized."

As a whole, Jon Wayne and the Pain aren't just a trip in the way-back machine. Ska-influenced horns mix with a few moments of electronic dub-style beats and offbeat tempos slammed next to quirky bass lines. This sound is made for anyone looking to find redemption, or maybe just a good time.

Jon Wayne and the Pain play 9 pm Sunday, June 17, at WOW Hall; \$7. – *Jackie Varriano*

**Noteworthy Charlatans**

When you toss **Bradley Wik and the Charlatans'** debut album *Burn What you Can, Bury the Rest* into a computer, the machine will categorize it as pop music. Machines lie, and they can't be trusted. This is not pop music. It is blue-

collar rock, working-class Americana with a sound comparable to Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty or John "Cougar" Mellencamp. The songs are full of girls, booze, bars and cars – no horses, no cowboy boots and no outlaws.

Including bassist Sasha Shybut, drummer Nick Kostenborder, guitarist Brian Bergstrom and Wik, who supplies the scratchy yet soulful vocals, this band is proof that rock 'n' roll isn't quite mummified yet. Or if it is, these guys are some serious tomb raiders.

Rock fans will have flashbacks listening to Bradley Wik and the Charlatans, alt-country buffs will also dig it. Country fans might not, but you get the feeling that these boys from Portland aren't trying to please that demographic – or any

demographic for that matter. This band takes the aesthetics of Uncle Tupelo, early Wilco and Ryan Adams and expands.

When you stumble into Wik and company, you find a band that is almost too young to possess the sound it commands, seasoned beyond its years and ready to take off.

Bradley Wik and the Charlatans play 8:30 pm Thursday, June 14, at Axe and Fiddle; \$5. – *Dante Zuñiga-West*

**Mouth of the Desert**

Phoenix, Ariz., is the serene severity of the suburban Southwest, the immediate instigator of **Stephen Steinbrink's** songs. Steinbrink, a prolific young recording artist in the composite vein of Elliott Smith, Nick Drake's dark side and the eclectic anti-troubadorismo of Beirut, plays and sings with the sparse desert minimalism he knows. And the desert has begun to bloom after a flash flood of recent recordings.

*I Drew a Picture*, Steinbrink's early June release, is a beautiful example of home-studio efficiency and quality. Recorded in Steinbrink's vaulted living room on a digital 8-track with a guitar, drum-machine and an array of vintage keyboards, *I Drew a Picture* sketches the inner-images of intelligent criticism. With recent influences ranging from paintings by Mark Rothko, essays on "the intense meditations of creative life" by John Cage and the guitar styles of Sierra-Leonese musician S.E. Rogie, Steinbrink's songs wax poetic at every opportunity.

Steinbrink also searches for inspiration among piles of social refuse, junk mail, strip malls, and the accidental artifacts of the internet. "These new songs are about trying to reconcile the weird alternate reality we have in this world of technology," he says.

Tracks like "Salt River Bed," a desert elegy, and "The End of the World," a romance to the final frying residents of a dried, dying city, are fragments of a sci-fi concept album imagining institutionally racist, uninhibited urban Phoenix sprawling unsustainably until the water runs dry. "The Punks" recognizes the inevitable road warriors who survive at the end.

On a 20-town tour, playing sets with Glochies (another Phoenix musician who plays both synthesizer and Gamelan gongs alongside), Steinbrink's style of digital folk-pop stretches past the dried-out pavement and cracks.

Stephen Steinbrink plays with Shay Roselip 8 pm Thursday, June 21, at Wandering Goat; \$5 suggested donation. – *Patrick Newson*



**BRADLEY WIK AND THE CHARLATANS**



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**Tennis Swap & Play Faire**  
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Saturday June 16th, from 10-2.

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**Have gear you'd like to get rid of?**

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Drop off times: Thursday and Friday, June 14th and 15th 8:30am - 8:00pm

Interested? Questions? Just ask Susan at [susan@eugeneymca.org](mailto:susan@eugeneymca.org)

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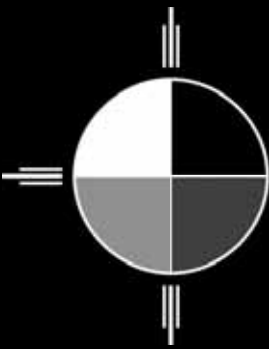
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