

Hang 'em high

Though the name sounds a bit ominous, **Shovels and Rope's** music is nothing short of a good time. The group adopted that name after releasing an album with the same title. The songs off that record are a collection of murder ballads, telling grim stories about digging and hanging, but that content doesn't entirely sum up the music of Cary Ann Hearst and Michael Trent.

Let's say you were taking a long walk through a dark wood; these are the sounds you'd want to hear if you stumbled into a clearing, alone, unarmed and open to the celebration of good company. It's campfire music that could find itself equally at home in a dusty, half-empty tavern.

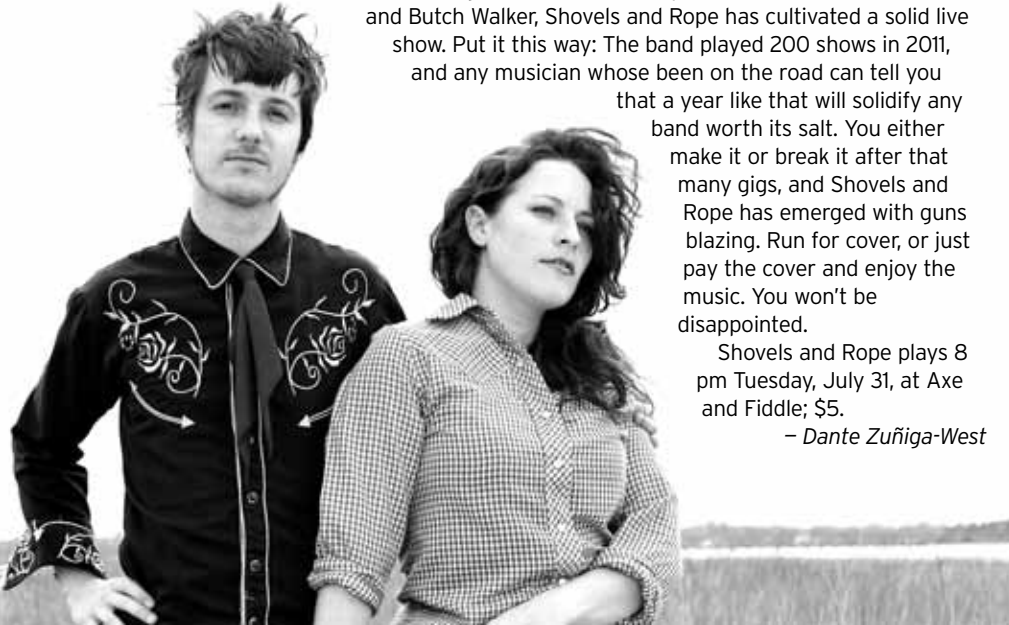
Hearst's vocals are bare-boned, powerful and compelling. Trent is a throwback, whose aptitude on the drums and harmonica is matter-of-fact solid. Hailing from Charleston, S.C., this duo has been on the road since 2010 and recently embarked upon a coast-to-coast tour that lands them Tuesday in Eugene. If you love harmony-driven folk music, old drums, tambourines and lonesome vocals, this is a band you will want to experience.

After touring with the likes of Hayes Carll, The Felice Brothers and Butch Walker, Shovels and Rope has cultivated a solid live show. Put it this way: The band played 200 shows in 2011, and any musician whose been on the road can tell you

that a year like that will solidify any band worth its salt. You either make it or break it after that many gigs, and Shovels and Rope has emerged with guns blazing. Run for cover, or just pay the cover and enjoy the music. You won't be disappointed.

Shovels and Rope plays 8 pm Tuesday, July 31, at Axe and Fiddle; \$5.

- Dante Zuñiga-West



The Living Crystal Faery Realm

How does one harden the masonry of a legend? *The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame* in Cleveland, Ohio, honored **Donovan** this year with an induction that's more than well deserved, and as a result he's emerged from the woodwork to begin touring again, with three festivals booked for the summer. Donovan has been called "the British Bob Dylan" among other things, but there's far more to be said for the Scotch-born bard than simply "he and Dylan knew each other." In case you're unfamiliar, he's the guy that wrote "Hurdy Gurdy Man," "Mellow Yellow" and "Catch the Wind," to name a minute selection.

Ohhh, *that* Donovan. Yeah, that Donovan.

"I'm kind of a bard from the old," he says. "A lot of my work draws very strongly on the so-called Celtic roots where I come from. There's a lot of lore and magic, and the tales we all grew up with; it all comes up in my music."

After being honored with music's highest recognition, Donovan decided it was time to "stretch his musical muscles," and that, teamed with what appears to be nostalgia (and the memory that music once scored him a sandwich, a cup of tea and two girls), has led him back to Oregon. When asked, he only has thin recollections of our state, but it's clear that he's been here before and fits right in.

"I remember doing a concert over there," he says, speaking excitedly from across the pond, "possibly at a university. Ken Kesey dropped by."

Donovan will be stopping in to headline Faerieworlds, the explorative arts festival taking place July 27-29 in the meadows of Mount Pisgah, and he says he's especially excited to share his love for what he calls "the Faery realm." He'll also be debuting a new show called "The Living Crystal Faery Realm," with a band formed specifically for this event, in an attempt to spread the wealth of the fourth dimension.

"I come from Bohemia," Donovan says. "Not the country - the state of mind. Faerieland is no different to where meditation takes you - a fourth level of consciousness. The Beatles and I brought this consciousness back from India, one that people needed in the Western World, and it's about a place inside us that we can access. I suppose we could call it the spirit world, and we can only access it in altered states."

Look, the legendary Donovan is somehow making it out to Eugene. And though it may be tough keeping track of all the groups you wanna see at this festival, it's certainly recommended that you check him out. After all, it's *fuckin' Donovan*, and he's psyched to see his "Oregonian pals" again.

Donovan plays Sunday, July 29, at Faerieworlds Music and Arts Festival; for more info, go to faerieworlds.com

- Andy Valentine

Religiosity

**Eliza Rickman** is an L.A.-based folk singer but she very well could have been plucked straight out of a dark, twisted fairy tale. With black hair, gorgeous eyes and the vocal chops to match, Rickman is nothing to be overlooked.

Her relationship with music spurred from a dark place. After a move to California at the impressionable age of 12, Rickman quickly realized Los Angeles wasn't all movie stars and palm trees. Music became her reprieve from that depression. With the sounds of Elton John and the Beatles at her side, Rickman began healing.

"I knew I would never be the Beatles, but I loved that something could help me get out of that terrible place," Rickman says. "I really thought it would be a great thing to provide that coping mechanism for somebody else."

That element of catharsis is what makes

Rickman's music so therapeutic, elegant and unique.

"I suppose I'm trying to help people understand it's okay to be sad," she says. "I think it's okay to revel in that for a while and experience that sadness."

Growing up as a pastor's daughter, Rickman can't help but bring faith into her lyrics. "There is at least one religious reference in each song on my album," Rickman says. "It's something I was raised with and taught to think a lot about."

With graceful undertones of religiosity that question the contradictory nature of our human existence, Rickman brings even more substance to her already complex musical repertoire.

Rickman plays 9 pm Thursday, July 26, at Sam Bond's; \$1-\$5.

- Ali Enright



Dumb and Doper

From the dungeons of the underground comes **Dumbfoundead** - a rhymesayer whose lyricism is capable of reaching to the outermost corners of the hip-hop universe and beyond. Blasting onto the scene in 2007 with the epic *Super Barrio Brothers* album, the Argentine-born emcee of Korean descent wasted no time in establishing himself as the ultimate videogame rapper. We're talking hardcore videogame nerd rap, complete with audio samples straight outta your old Super Nintendo game console.

What Phoenix Orion did in 1999, when he released *Zimulated Experiencez* - arguably the most overlooked and seminal science fiction-themed rap album in hip-hop history - Dumbfoundead did with *Super Barrio Brothers* and gamer culture. It is doubtful that anyone will surpass the precedent he set with those tracks and, really, any other emcee attempting to blend videogames and hip hop into one cohesive album would at best achieve equal status.

But Dumbfoundead is no one-trick pony. Which makes sense for a kid whose formative years were spent running around the shady parts of Los

Angeles battle-rapping in the same environment as infamous rap tyrant Cadalack Ron, or tearing up open-mic stages with numerous other Project Blowed prodigies.

New cuts from the album *Love Everyday* display Dumbfoundead's ability to tackle completely different subject matter. These songs are almost entirely focused on love, relationships and the struggle of an independent artist in love with his work. Funky hooks and jazzy samples are flexed and flexed again as Dumbfoundead wields a slower cadence tailored to listeners who appreciate storytelling.

Dumb hasn't just evolved in terms of his content; his stage show has come along with him. He is now a true showman, capable of moving the crowd and prowling the stage with the confidence of a troubadour. Simply put, he's advanced to the next level of the game, and he's touring the West Coast to prove it.

Dumbfoundead plays with Watsky 9 pm Saturday, July 28, at WOW Hall; \$10 adv., \$12 door.

- Dante Zuñiga-West

