

AgesandAges for the Ages

Writing about live shows in Eugene means you cover a lot of up-and-coming Portland bands, and this is not a bad thing. But since "sorta folkie" is the sound du jour up in P-town, there comes a point when you run out of folk-hyphenates to try and capture the music of Portland into words. And this is where I'm at with **AgesandAges**. Indie-folk? Folk-pop? Yes, AgesandAges are all these things. But like a lot of Portland bands these days, their stuff is also very *now*, which, as is often the case, means it's also very *then*.

And by "then" I mean AgesandAges recall a grainy and romantic image of the '60s, a time when people harmonized barefoot in a field because they thought it would make a difference. Male and female voices mix, tambourines chime and guitars jingle-jangle (in the morning you'll go following them). The background image on their website is the band standing in an idyllic Oregon meadow, arms outstretched to the heavens, faces blissful and serene – *namaste*, my brothers and sisters.

But what keeps AgesandAges from being overly hokey-folkie is a Beatles-esque pop sensibility on tracks like "No Nostalgia" from their 2011 debut *Alright You Restless*. The song is propelled along with rootsy handclaps and a funky-commune vibe that's infectious rather than pastiche, the hippie-soul groove earnest enough to win over the most jaded Portland hipster. In May vocalist Tim Perry told ripcityreview.com: "I definitely like the feed between the band and the audience, and I like that as an audience member and a band member, depending on which side I'm standing. That's where the magic comes in I think."

AgesandAges play with Shay Roselip 8:30 pm Sunday, Sept. 16, at Sam Bond's Garage; \$5. 21+. – *William Kennedy*

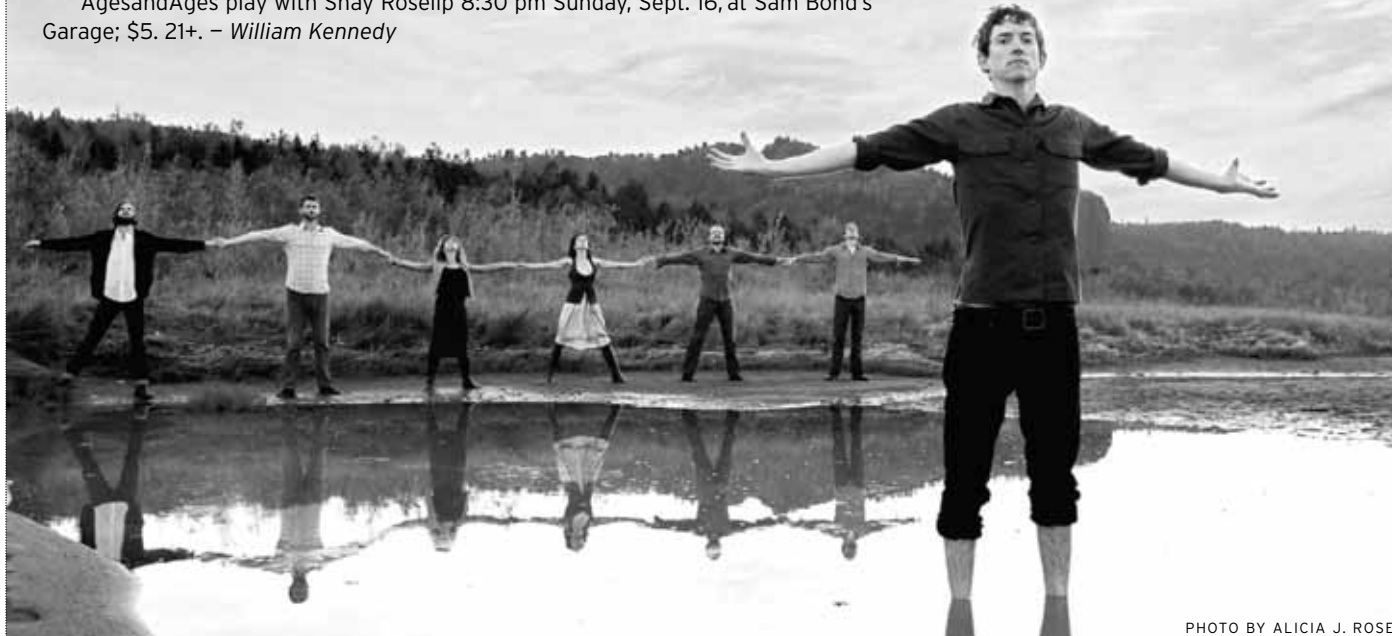


PHOTO BY ALICIA J. ROSE



Don't Miss All These Pretty Lights

Although "back to school" commercials are in heavy rotation, let us forget about notebooks and football games for one brief moment and concentrate on sweet, fleeting summer. For it is only in summer that you can dance until you work up a sweat outdoors under the stars at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. And who doesn't love dancing up a storm perched atop a stadium chair at the Cuthbert, especially when it's to the sounds of Colorado's Derek Vincent Smith, better known by his stage name, **Pretty Lights**?

An electronic artist who has been stealing hearts and laying down beats since 2006, Pretty Lights got his name from a vintage Pink Floyd poster. His sound is a mélange of funk, hip hop and dubstep, and an evening spent in front of his illuminated speaker city promises ringing ears and a sore backside.

While I personally love his use of vintage vocal soul hooks mixed with horns and glitchy beats, others might fall for his innovative remixes. Featuring everyone from Kanye West to Radiohead and Nirvana, Pretty Lights melds genres artfully, tying up any loose ends with a constant throbbing beat. While he has a regular set and an arsenal of albums to pick from, a Pretty Lights show thrives on improvisation, showcased musically and visually.

If you're looking to get into a little party rocking and familiarize yourself with a few tunes pre-show, all full albums and remixes are available for free download at prettylightsmusic.com.

Grab your glow sticks, your sweatbands and your best dancing shoes for one last glorious summer jam.

Pretty Lights plays with Emancipator and Paul Basic 5 pm Thursday, Sept. 13, at Cuthbert Amphitheater; \$33 adv., \$35 door. – *Jackie Varriano*

Vicci of The Voice Loves Variety


If nothing else, the first season of NBC's *The Voice* showed the rest of America what a lot of people in the Northwest already knew: **Vicci Martinez** is a damn fine talent who is going places. When she comes to Eugene's WOW Hall Sept. 20 in support of her latest release, *Vicci*, our fair city will be treated to an undeniable mix of groovy rock, soulful ballads and upbeat pop that will leave little doubt in your mind as to why she ended up being one of the finalists in that competition.

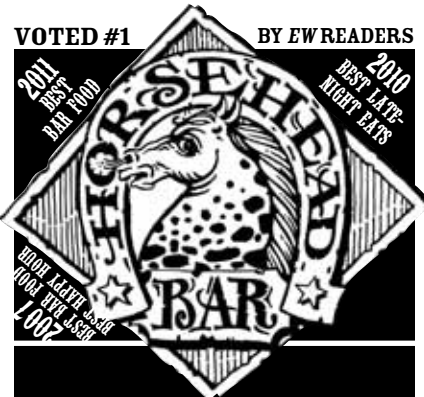
Martinez's performances are noteworthy because of her penchant for variety, something that is on full display on *Vicci*. "Stop Pretending" is the sort of engaging pop-rock that radio loves because of its message of being true to yourself, while "Come Along" is a more serious, mid-tempo number extolling the virtues of living your life to the fullest. And in addition to her songs not sounding like mailed-in clones of each other, she even dodges this same landmine in the vocal category by restraining herself in certain songs and belting it out in others. The ballad to her late father, "Let Go," could have easily seen her losing control of her emotions and screaming for the heavens by the end, but she wisely chooses not to do that and the song benefits. On the other end of the spectrum, however, there are moments during the chorus of the empowering "I Can Love" where she confidently channels her inner Christina Aguilera and hits some aggressive, show-stopping notes, lest we forget that she has some serious range.

Martinez will be taking her love of variety one step further on this West Coast tour, as all of her performances will be acoustic. We should be in for a real treat.

Vicci Martinez plays 8 pm Thursday, Sept. 20, at WOW Hall, \$12-\$20. – *Brian Palmer*

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