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GROG AND TOAD

If you're looking for the life of the party, look no further than Celtic folk-punk outfit **Toad in the Hole**. And since *EW* last caught up with them in January, they've brought some new partiers to the scene. New Toaders are Tiffany Kettel on fiddle and Chris Leland on guitar (both formerly of electric Irish punk-rock band ManOverBoard), as well as Graeme Pletscher on tin whistle (of Sol Seed sax fame). Meanwhile, veteran Toader and bodhran player Joel Kenney is on indefinite hiatus because of a study abroad stint in St. Petersburg, Russia.

"Chris and I have been huge Toad in the Hole fans," Kettel says of joining. "We were absolutely star struck at the band and at Matty." Matty is Matthew Hayward-McDonald, lead singer and band visionary.

Besides some shows at Luckey's, Tsunami Books, Whiteaker Block Party and Faerieworlds, the group has spent the last year gearing up for an upcoming album. "We are on the verge of doing all these cool things," Kettel says. "We are writing new music and learning new music. We are getting ready to go to the studio and record as a new group." Jon Conlon, bassist for the band as well as for Betty and the Boy, will be doing the recording. "Jon is a sound guy," Kettel says. "We have a lot of really great equipment."

Toad in the Hole shows have gone down in history as some Eugene's most raucous, filled with fun debauchery. Their live act possesses a raw emotional quality, as their tales run the gamut from stories of loss and woe to the sort of drinking songs that are synonymous with pub crowds belting out the lyrics with the band, a friend in one arm and a pint in the other. Fans can expect more of the same, but with a new twist.

"They can look forward to the Toad in the Hole that they remember but they will also enjoy the new lineup," Leland says.

Toad in the Hole plays with Robert Sarazin Blake and Corwin Bolt 9:30 pm Friday, Dec. 20, at Sam Bond's; \$5. — *Brian Palmer and Alex Notman*



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