



NOSTALGIA BLITZ

In their 15-year career, the five members of **Blitzen Trapper** have traversed wide musical landscapes, from the layered, progressive rock of small dive bars to the rustic alt country of Appalachia. Even within individual albums, Trapper is known for a range of sound that varies dramatically from song to song.

Take, for instance, their 2008 breakout album, *Furr*. The title track is a pastoral ballad marked by folk storytelling (a young man abandons homes to join a wolf pack). Harmonica brings “Furr” to a diffused end, only to lead into the loud, drum-backed, piano-accompanied follow-up track, “God and Suicide.”

“It’s not common anymore,” Eric Earley (guitar/harmonica/vocals/keyboard) tells *EW*. “Thirty, 40 years ago you used to hear acoustic songs, then a piano number, then hard rock. You hear it on Beatles’ records, too; they go from show tunes to hard rock to folk songs.”

Blitzen Trapper’s newest album, *All Across This Land* (released in October), is marked by big riffs and echoing hooks, making it a solid display of classic rock ‘n’ roll. Earley calls this album, the band’s ninth, a nostalgic record. The lyrics explore the influences of family, hometowns and coming of age, and through such attention to these histories — when we’re all just “stupid, strange and young at heart” — we can find clarity in the present, Earley explains. “There’s nostalgia, but there’s also this idea of trying to figure out who you are by looking at certain aspects of your past.”

Los Angeles singer-songwriter **Phoebe Bridgers** joins Blitzen Trapper 9 pm Monday, Nov. 9, at Hi-Fi Music Hall; \$18 adv., \$22 door. 21-plus. — *Caitlin Mackenzie*

MAINSTREAM BLUES

Jonny Lang made his name as a 16-year-old blues guitar prodigy. Since then, he’s dabbled in rock, blues, gospel and pop — all the while remaining one of the most respected guitar slingers in the business.

Like John Mayer meets Eric Clapton, Lang’s got the voice — and good looks — of a teen pop idol, evidenced in 2013’s pure pop-leaning record *Fight for My Soul*.

All in all, there ain’t much left for blues purists in Jonny Lang, despite the record kicking off with a boogie-blues riff from track “Blew Up (The House).”

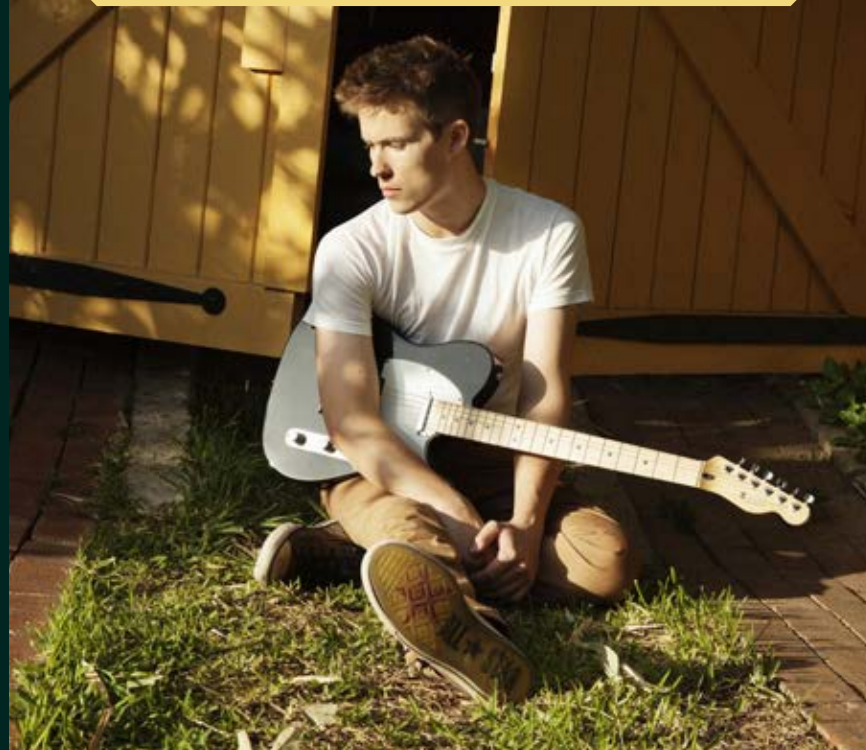
Instead, like a guitar-playing John Legend, Lang seems content following the blueprint of pop-crossover artist Santana more so than blues-gone-mainstream legends John Lee Hooker or Muddy Waters.

Soul track “What You’re Looking For” is slightly Autotune-inflected, vaguely blues-rock tinged pop-soul scorcher that could fit alongside many current radio hits from artists like Rob Thomas.

But there’s plenty left in Lang for fans of virtuosic guitar playing. Just check out the Santana-meets-George Harrison ballad “The Truth.”

Jonny Lang plays with **The Runaway Saints** 8 pm Sunday, Nov. 8, at McDonald Theatre; \$35 adv., \$40 door. All ages.

— *William Kennedy*



FRESH AIR

Mac Miller’s latest release, *GO:OD AM*, reminds us we can trust the 23-year-old rapper to rise after a period of adversity. The dark undertones from his last self-released album *Faces*, focusing on drug addiction, give us a peek into the culture that often comes with money and fame at such a young age. (His song “Ascension” declares, “Dear family, my sanity go down when my cash go up.”)

GO:OD AM is a breathe of fresh air. It’s not preaching sobriety or redemption, just an honest self-reflection paired with upbeat, catchy melodies. He opens the album with “Doors,” admitting, “I’m not sayin’ I’m sober/ I’m just in a better place.”

As it’s his first album released since signing a massive deal with Warner Bros. Records, it’s a pleasant surprise to hear that Miller hasn’t sold his soul to the devil for a poppy hit single just yet.

Miller makes his way to Eugene on Nov. 6, and we can only hope to hear some of the old Mac we love (“Party on Fifth Ave,” “Donald Trump”) along with a new Mac we might learn to love even more.

Rapper **Goldlink** and alt hip-hop rapper **Domo Genesis** open for Mac Miller 7 pm Friday, Nov. 6, at McDonald Theatre; \$32.50. All ages. — *Sydney Zuelke*