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BB BACK BEAT

MUSIC NEWS &
NOTES FROM
DOWN IN THE
WILLAMETTE
VALLEY

The road to becoming **Sonic Bent** is long and winding. The self-described “progressive jam with a splash of cry-in-your-beer Americana” band — featuring Jeff Alberts (drums, vocals), Keenan Dorn (guitar, vocals), Noah Kamrat (bass, vocals) and Patrick Kavaney (guitar, vocals) — got its start in 2011. Founding members Kamrat and Kavaney (who met in middle school), however, have been carving the cross-country path to Sonic Bent, dabbling in other music outfits that laid the groundwork for this one, over decades. Sonic Bent, formerly configured as The Last Drags, now celebrates its CD release for *Wander Through Dreams* 9:30 pm Friday, Dec. 16, at Hi-Fi Music Hall's lounge; \$5, 21-plus. Eugene's **EKKO Base** will also perform. Sonic Bent says it draws on influences like The Allman Brothers, The Band, The Grateful Dead and Radiohead, and that certainly comes through on *Wander Through Dreams*. But the band has no use for labels, as Kamrat explains on the band's website: “We like to take a pop structure, start it rolling and then fuck with it. These concepts like ‘jam-band’ and ‘rock’ and ‘Americana’ can be so reductive.”

Speaking of Americana, Sam Bond's Garage's schedule is chockfull of musicians putting their own spin on that broad genre this week, beginning with Colorado bluegrass five-piece **Ragged Union**, led by wife-and-husband duo Christina and Geoff Union, 8:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 15, with indie-folk duo **LeMaster Abrams** and singer-songwriter **Ashleigh Flynn**; \$5, 21-plus. Listen for the sparkling mando of the band's Jordan Ramsey, who won the 2016 Walnut Valley National Mandolin Championship. Next up is a double dose of returning favorite **Petunia & The Vipers** 5 to 7 pm and 9:30 to 11 pm Friday, Dec. 16; \$5-\$10. The high-lonesome Western swing outfit is touring with its 2016 release *Dead Bird on the Highway*. Then at 9 pm Thursday, Dec. 22, a night of Americana begins with soulful Maryland duo **Pretty Gritty** followed by Portland experimental-folk pair **Small Souls** and Eugene's own twangy, melodic golden boy **Tyler Fortier**; \$5.

Don't miss: Americana goes old-timey with Portland's driving, frenetic and joyous **Foghorn Stringband** and Eugene's rollicking ragtime-country-jazz fusion band **Breakers Yard** 9 pm Saturday, Dec. 17, at WOW Hall; \$12 adv., \$15 door. Both bands are part of the Pacific Northwest's “Old Time Renaissance.”



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