



FAR OUT FAR EAST PSYCH ROCK

Kikagaku Moyo, a Japanese psych-rock band, is returning to Eugene to promote their new release. It's called *Stone Garden EP*. It's out now and it was recorded in Prague. As if this doesn't sound awesome enough already, a statement from the band says the *Stone Garden EP* "was influenced by the raw and seemingly endless jams of psychedelic pioneers. The freeform songs that emerged from those sessions were refined over several months at the band's home in Tokyo, where each song was sculpted into an uncommon form." So come join me as I throw up a peace sign while giving out a slow and spacey "righteous, dude." Dialing up the cool quotient on this show even further, Kikagaku Moyo invited Eugene's own psych-rock powerhouse **Snow White** to join them on stage alongside **Sugar Candy Mountain** 10 pm Saturday, May 20, at Hi-Fi Lounge; \$10 advance, \$12 door, 21-plus. — *Will Kennedy*

MUSIC

EARLY MUSICKING

From Baroque to Broadway



WILLIAM DONGOIS

The academy and the arts don't always mix well. Entombing arts in the ivory tower can lead to insularity, esotericism and disregard of popular appeal. But at its best, the academy can enrich the arts with its depth of knowledge, benefiting audiences with previously undiscovered repertoire and styles of interpretation.

Case in point: the University of Oregon's annual Musicking Conference, which runs May 23-27.

Not only does this conference reach scholars all over the world, but its performances also entertain hundreds of Eugeneans with *free* concerts informed by ever-increasing research into how centuries-old music was actually performed when it was written. The performances benefit from that authenticity.

Highlights include a historically informed performance

Wednesday, May 24, of one of the great early Baroque masterpieces, Claudio Monteverdi's *Selva morale et spirituale*, at Central Lutheran Church, 1857 Potter Street. On Saturday, May 27, the church hosts a much rarer Italian Baroque gem: Giovanni Bononcini's oratorio *La Maddalena a' piedi di Cristo* on period instruments. Performances of a more intimate nature happen over the lunch hour May 24 (Renaissance Wind Band), May 25 (Renaissance lute) and May 26 (early Italian keyboard music) at the university's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

Then there's an afternoon medieval poetry and music event featuring Portland Baroque Orchestra cellist Joanna Blendulf and Portland early music singer Aaron Cain May 26 at the UO's Collier House, which also hosts a concert the previous evening featuring **William Dongois**, one of the world's most-respected cornetto (a Baroque

woodwind instrument) players. It's a chance to do some musical time-traveling with the best possible tour guides.

As a kind of Musicking appetizer, check out later Baroque music with Grand Cru Baroque playing music by J. S. Bach, C. P. E. Bach (a superb composer in his own right, unfortunately overshadowed by his immortal dad's legacy), French Baroque master Jean-Marie Leclair and more May 21 at First United Methodist Church, 1376 Olive Street. The band features the always-engaging Blendulf along with leader and flute and recorder master Kim Pineda, plus Eugene's own keyboard whiz Julia Brown and Seattle Baroque guitar/lute specialist August Denhard.

And if that's not enough to sate your craving for the beauties of Baroque music, don't worry: The Oregon Bach Festival — another fruitful combination of education and entertainment, academics and the arts — is just around the corner.

For musical time-traveling to more-recent eras, there's the Eugene Symphonic Band's Pops Concert May 21 at First Baptist Church, 3550 Fox Meadow Road, which sports tunes by Benny Goodman, Gershwin, Sousa and more.

Hear even more American classics in the Emerald City Jazz Kings' May 18 and 21 shows at The Shedd, featuring music by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed. Who dat? Merely the composers of *Singin' in the Rain*'s bountiful score, excerpts from which these concerts will feature along with the team's other Hollywood Broadway hits of the 1930s and '40s.

And speaking of Broadway, Soromundi Lesbian Chorus sings hits from several decades of Broadway music, from "The Pajama Game" to "Fun Home," this Saturday, May 20, at the Hult's Soreng Theater. — *Brett Campbell*

NEARER THE HEART

Singer-songwriter Holly Near has spent 45 years singing for political change

Folk activist-musician Holly Near is a seasoned singer-songwriter whose recipe is impossible to pin down. Her honeylike yet raspy vocals cry out against oppression, while her tender demeanor draws in crowds who crave a church geared towards a soul, not a deity. After 45 years of performing her highly politicized songs, Near has found herself — on stages, in her audience, and in her own personal struggles with and against waves of oppression.

"People from the audience have often said coming to one of my concerts is like going to church, except there is no religion, no historic icons or spiritual tradition," Near says. "There is something holy about people gathering together with their best intentions right out front, their hearts wide open."

Think *You Don't Own Me* by Leslie Gore meets a Pacific Northwest women's festival. At first listen, her songs open with a hymnal's ambience: Her vocals are rich, stretched to emotional lengths, and her lyrics expand into stories thick with catharsis and prose — as well as, at times, some comical relief.

Near's journey as a melodic messenger was less defined in her early career; her path remained self-crafted and

geared towards her version of success. After growing up in Potter Valley, California, with musically and politically inclined parents, Near found herself en route to a career in acting, although singing was her calling.

"I thought of myself more as a singer," she says. "I kept getting acting jobs where I did not sing. I got paid, and I needed to make a living. My first substantial payment for a film job was the start-up money for my record company, Redwood Records." In 1972, independent record companies were seldom owned, run and operated by women, placing Near among the first women to create what is now referred to as "indie" music.

For 20 years, she shared her record company and resources with fellow artists showing a passion for change and political activism. As her community and audience grew, her songs hung heavy with a call for feminism, anti-racism, tolerance and action. Near has produced 26 albums of her own, each littered with her gospel-like anthems for equality.

Near is well aware that a lifetime spent creating and sharing activist music may never result in wealth, fame or mainstream attention. Lyrics that preach about the deaths of African-Americans and women's rights are seldom heard on the radio, even if Beyoncé is belting them out. "I feel bad for



people who don't know that a group like Sweet Honey in the Rock even exists," Near says. "Sometimes I think it is harder on the general population not to have access to us than it is for us not to have access to them."

Near continues to weave her powerful music for the audience that shows up time and time again to share her message of change.

"I think sometimes people take what they hear at one of my concerts and use it to go back into their jobs or families — in that I mean, the concert helps them improve their activism. I love that part. The songs are healing. The music is entertaining. The evening is meant to refuel."

Come recharge with Holly Near along with Jorah LeFleur 7:30 pm Friday, May 19, at Unity of the Valley. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$28 at the door, and the show is a benefit for Womenspace. — *Kelsey Anne Rankin*