

POLYRHYTHMICS



BIG BANDS

Ensembles perform everything from international fusion to George Gershwin

Every artist wants to build a brand these days, so it takes some courage to change your name after building up a reputation and a fan base. But that's what **Jasnam Daya Singh** — previously Weber Iago, and before that called Weber Drummond — has done.

The Brazil-born, Vancouver, Washington-based pianist and composer has performed and recorded around the world with jazz greats such as Oregon's Paul McCandless and L.A. flutist James Newton. Since gaining his new name along with his new religion (Sikh), he's maintained his fusion of jazz, classical and Brazilian music. On Aug. 16 at Roaring Rapids Pizza, he debuts a new composition performed by top Portland jazz artists in the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble.

Another relatively large band that incorporates jazz and other influences, **Seattle's Polyrhythmics**, opens for the eclipse Aug. 21 at Silverton's gorgeous Oregon Garden.

The nine-member ensemble (including trumpet, trombone, three percussionists, guitars, bass, sax/flute, keyboard) cooks up irresistible horn-fueled polyrhythmic funk over cyclical grooves, heavily influenced by Fela Kuti's Afrobeat, other times more reminiscent of Meters-style New Orleans funk, and always danceable.

A very different horn-driven experience happens at the University of Oregon, which is hosting famous classical trombonist **Joseph Alessi** for educational purposes all week. His residency culminates in several concerts featuring him with workshop participants, with the big final trombone choir concert Aug. 12 at the UO's Beall Concert Hall.



JOSEPH ALESSI

Actually, you'll find a trombone or three in all the shows listed here, including on stage at The Shedd's annual **Oregon Festival of American Music**, which wraps up this weekend with reprises of some of the shows we told you about in last month's preview. This Thursday's (Aug. 10) Star Dust big band concert features Jesse Cloninger and the Emerald City Jazz Kings performing classic 1920s-'40s American songs, some from films or musicals that are now less well known than the songs they spawned. The program includes Hoagy Carmichael's "Star Dust," "Skylark" and "Georgia on My Mind," as well as Duke Ellington hits and more.

Friday's (Aug. 11) matinee with big band and vocal quartet stars the lyrics of Ira Gershwin and music by some of last century's greatest songwriters such as Harold Arlen, Kurt Weill, Vernon Duke and, of course, Ira's brother George. Friday evening's show features one of Ira's only rivals for the title of greatest 20th century lyricist, Lorenz Hart, and music by his great partner Richard Rodgers and others, from "Blue Moon" to "The Lady Is A Tramp" and so many more hits and rarities.

Saturday's (Aug. 12) matinee concert, sporting a smaller combo (including two horns) backing a vocal quartet of Shedd stars spotlights Arlen's immortal music: "Blues in the Night," "Come Rain or Come Shine," "The Man That Got Away," "Stormy Weather" and many more, including "Over the Rainbow." Saturday night's closing concert is basically an American Songbook greatest hits show, with a jazz septet and vocal quintet reprising some classics from the earlier shows and others, like "Body and Soul," *Casablanca's* "As Time Goes By," Cole Porter's "Night and Day," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and a dozen more.

And don't forget the festival's flurry of free lectures and films, all happening at The Shedd all week. ■

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