

Singing About Portland's Ghosts and Marijuana

Lee "Scratch" Perry performs Friday at the Wonder Ballroom

BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lee "Scratch" Perry has a market niche nailed down: There can only be one reggae superstar in the business of catching spirits.

Even as a septuagenarian, Perry, a Jamaican living in Germany, doesn't plan on relinquishing his brand of vampire-luring dub-echo trance anytime soon.

He has only moved his focus of his "powers" in Portland eastward. For many years in a row, Perry has

packed concert halls downtown, but Friday the 13th's gig will be at the Wonder Ballroom on Northeast Russell Street.

Preparing for the show by speaking with the Portland Observer, he claims that this city has been an important haven for various spirits and people who know how to deal with the spirit world.

"There are lots of ghosts in Portland, and I am the ghost catcher," he says. Wanting to verify that he knows how to properly handle vari-

ous kinds of spirit matter, he adds, "but I don't burn them."

If his past concerts are any indication, Perry will require much on-stage consumption of marijuana to perform his musical interaction with the spirit world. Calling marijuana "rain," he suggests that the substance is important to protect against inevitable encounters with vampires.

"Everybody's yearning for blood, but there is nothing rain can't do, so all my energy's coming from rain," he says.

Perry supports recent efforts in Portland to decriminalize marijuana, and he condemns local politicians who stand in the way



Lee "Scratch" Perry

of this "medicine."

He says, "We need to see who's running in the Portland government, making laws keeping people from lighting a cigarette."

But Perry makes it clear that he only supports marijuana cigarettes. "What I really wish the people in Portland to do is to stop smoking nicotine cigarettes, stop drinking alcohol, stop eating dead meat and eat vegetables."

By doing so, Perry chooses to be a "white magician," which he says is important as a black man.

Only sometimes are Perry's magical workings really beyond comprehension. He says, "I'm

working with Buddha the headmaster, and if you want an encounter with Buddha, you have to put your hands over your head like you're making a red bow, you know like Buddha makes when he's making a skipping rope, so you put your hands over your head like you're fanning a rope, but don't do it too much, use your imagination."

Perry is looking forward to letting loose in the U.S. before buckling down to make a new album with a friend in Germany.

"On the West Coast I'll really turn the clock, and if the people are Buddha-nice, I'll give them another crypt and I'll let them have a happy earth day," he says.

New Park Opens in East Portland



Kashaya Lewis and Catherine Darling enjoy a cool treat on the playground of Portland's newest city park, Earl Boyles Park at Southeast 112th Avenue and Boise Street. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Monday for the Lents neighborhood green space, which includes a new water playground, toddler-sized play equipment, community garden, volleyball court and horseshoe pits.

Funeral Puts N-Word to Rest NAACP held eulogy for the slur

The N-word is officially dead to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Civil Rights organization, which held a symbolic funeral in Detroit for the demise of Jim Crow in 1963, recently conducted a similar funeral for a similarly noxious term—the N-word—during their national convention July 7-12 in Detroit.

Rev. Wendell Anthony, president of the organization's Detroit branch, said members and supporters of the NAACP conducted services on Sunday, complete with a "eulogy" for the racial slur.

"We are committed to ending hate," Anthony said. "It doesn't do anyone any good, whether it's a journalist on TV or a rapper on the radio."

The announcement came after a renewed discussion nationally about racial insensitivity, brought on by Don Imus' derogatory "nappy headed ho" comments about black members of the Rutgers University women's basketball team. The remark led to Imus being fired by both CBS Radio and NBC after major companies pulled their advertising.

"Now that corporate America has caught up, maybe something will happen," Anthony said. "We have to stop investing in stuff that is killing us."

Jim Crow was the systematic, mostly Southern practice of discrimination against and segregation of blacks from the end of post-Civil War reconstruction into the mid-20th century.

Candidate Criticizes Transportation Disparities

Fills potholes in front of his northeast home

BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN
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The mudslinging has begun, literally, for the city-council seat that oversees transportation issues.

Commissioner Sam Adams has not yet announced whether he will run for reelection or mayor, but his only potential challenger so far, Ethos Music Center founder Charles Lewis, is already attacking his transportation plan by privately



Charles Lewis

filling potholes in northeast Portland this week.

Lewis thinks the neglected dirt road in front of his Cully neighborhood house represents citywide disparities in the way transportation funding is allocated.

"North/northeast Portland gets stuck paying for the cost twice," he says, when projects like the OHSU tram get funds while neighborhood streets continue to deteriorate.

Adams claims that a lack of investment in general transportation funding during the last decade forces him to seek sources of "emer-

gency" funding.

"We either pay now or pay a lot more later," says Adams, who met last month with Cully's neighborhood association to address the unimproved-roads issue.

Bashing Adams' call for a municipal 12-cent gas tax, Lewis argues that the proposal would disproportionately impact lower-income people who wouldn't be able to buy their gas outside of the city limits.

He vows to use funding more efficiently if elected, saying, "we can't continue to spend our way out of problems caused by poor planning and lack of oversight."

Activist on State Education Panel

Portland community activist Lew Frederick has joined the State Board of Education as its newest member, replacing Urban League of Portland executive Vanessa Gaston who left the board last year when she moved out of state.

Frederick is a consultant and writer specializing in community relations, science journalism, education, minority issues, health issues and political strategy.

He has served in public relations for the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College and was a



Lew Frederick

longtime Director of Public Information for Portland Public Schools. He is also a former television and radio reporter for KGW in Portland.

Frederick earned a Bachelor of Arts in drama from Earlham College in Richmond, Ind. and he is presently a Ph.D. candidate at Portland State University in urban affairs and speech and communications.

"The members of the state board are serving at a critical time," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo. "As we move forward to ensure that all

students are prepared for college or the work force with 21st century skills, it is the state board that will oversee the important work of implementing Oregon's new high school diploma requirements."

Jefferson Documentary Selected for Festival Student films take part in awards

The documentary film "Reading Between the Lines: Jefferson—Our Story," has been chosen for the 31st Annual Young People's Film and Video Festival taking place Sunday, July 15 at 2 p.m. at Portland Art Museum's Whitsell Auditorium, 1219 SE Park Ave.

The festival is a part of the Northwest Film Center's Young Filmmakers Program and will screen the best film, video, animation and digital media produced by students and schools throughout the northwest.

Twenty-six pieces were selected for this year's program, many of which are from the Portland/Vancouver area, including "Reading Between the Lines," a film originally made by Jefferson High School students for the Community Drug Awareness Project and sponsored by the Northwest Film Center and Oregon Partnership.

The film was made in Spring 2006 by 31 Jefferson sophomores who shared their story to learn the technical aspects of the craft and challenge stereotypes about gangs, violence and poor performance that plagued their school's identity.

It features interviews with fellow students as well as city leaders and Portland activists.

The 21-minute film received a standing ovation at its November premiere at the Portland Art Museum and was re-screened in January for Jefferson students and community members at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.

The Young People's Festival winners will be on hand Sunday to receive certificates of achievement and recognition by family and the community. Other local winners include students from Portland, Beaverton, Eugene, Gresham, Vancouver and Hillsboro.

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