

Bandcampin': Good stuff for your ears

BY BEN SALMON

For The Bulletin

Bandcamp is an online music platform used largely by independent artists and record labels to stream songs and sell merchandise. It's also a vibrant virtual community teeming with interesting sounds just waiting to be discovered. Each week, I'll highlight three releases available on the site that are well worth your time and attention. If you find something you dig, please consider supporting the artist with a purchase.

CANARY ROOM, "Christine"

Maddy Heide is a Portland-based singer-songwriter with a whole bunch of songs posted to her Bandcamp at canaryroom.bandcamp.com. But this unassuming five-track EP isn't there; it's a co-release by two small labels, Bud Tapes and Oranj Discs, and it's exceedingly lovely. Heide is a folk singer with a knack for vocal melodies that are compelling and comforting and endlessly listenable. (Seriously, I've listened to this thing like eight times in a row.) Part of the magic here is the recording, which was done outside, so you can hear birds chirping alongside Heide's acoustic guitar and voice.



The result is a set of songs that are quietly enchanting, like a lo-fi Joni Mitchell, or the contemporary sad-folk-pop band Florist. This is the perfect soundtrack for a slow morning under gray skies.

JETS TO BRAZIL, "Orange Rhyming Dictionary"

From 1986 to 1996, Blake Schwarzenbach was the singer and songwriter for Jawbreaker, a Bay Area punk band that

jets to brazil orange rhyming dictionary



was revered for its fiercely anti-establishment stance, and then ostracized by its own scene for signing to a major label during the music industry's post-Nirvana punk-rock feeding frenzy. After Jawbreaker broke up, Schwarzenbach moved across the country and started Jets to Brazil, as if he was trying to leave behind his old life and music and start anew. The point of all of this is that in the fall of 1998, Jets to Brazil's debut album, "Orange Rhyming Dictionary" was hotly anticipated, and it delivered: buzzy gui-

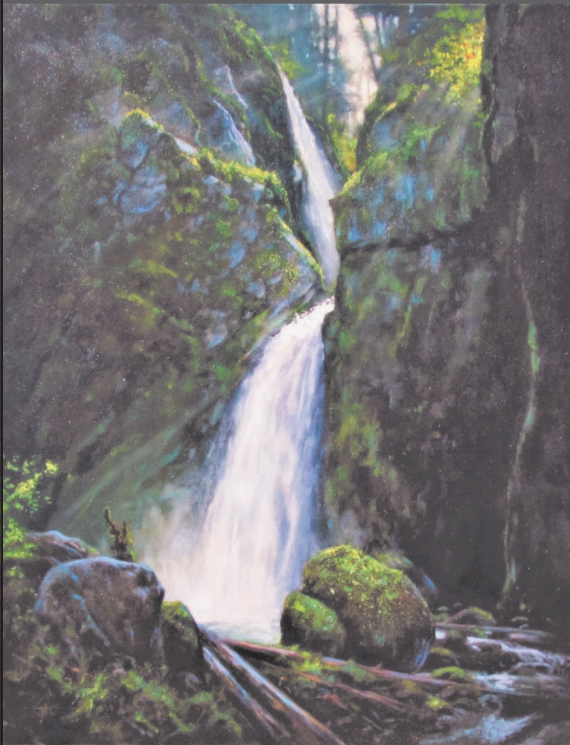
tars, slower tempos, more post-punk than pop-punk, but still with heaping helpings of Schwarzenbach's familiar rasp. It was no Jawbreaker, but then again, that was the point.

NOURA MINT SEYMALI, "Tzenni"

It seems Noura Mint Seymali was predestined to make vibrant and vital music for the world to enjoy. Born into a prominent musical family in her home country of Mauritania (on Africa's western coast), Seymali learned to sing from her famous stepmother, to write songs from her scholar father and to play the aridine — a nine-string harp traditionally reserved for women — from her grandmother. After years as a well-known artist in her part of the world, Seymali's 2014 album "Tzenni" took her blend of traditional Moorish griot music and modern dance-pop around the globe. It's easy to hear why it travels so well: Seymali's distinctive melodies and her husband Jeiche Ould Chighaly's psychedelic guitar work make for an entrancing combination.

■ Ben Salmon is a Bend-based music journalist and host of *Left Of The Dial*, which airs 8-10 p.m. Thursdays on KPOV, 88.9 FM and streams at kpo.org. You can find him on Bandcamp and Twitter at [@bcsalmon](https://twitter.com/bcsalmon).

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Several years ago, Art in the High Desert invited the public to see the jurying process firsthand, and the 110 or so artists who were juried in and journeyed here each year accomplished what they'd intended: selling their work over the course of the three-day show. AHD consistently ranked highly in the Art Fair SourceBook, a bible of the industry, in terms of sales.

Then came the pandemic. In December 2020, AHD released a letter to artists, volunteers and supporters letting them know that due to uncertainties relating to the pandemic, the show would be canceled for the second consecutive year. Below those explocatory first few paragraphs were the plans — or, rather, lack of plans — for AHD beyond 2021.

"The board is looking for a new director who would need to develop a new team (with the past board's help). This director will have specific skills that fit into the AHD model: a person who has extensive background as a show artist and/or background in producing top level juried art & craft shows," the letter read in part. "The new team will need to renew, re-establish, and create new partnerships and address financing for a paid director position. With the help of a reliable working Board, Carla & Dave Fox have guided AHD, mostly unpaid, as a gift to artists and the Central Oregon community for 12 years."

Any possible director would need to

make a living wage, and the new board would need to be prepared to roll up sleeves and work, not just advise, the letter noted.

"We have said for two or three or four years, at least to the artists, or anybody who'd listen, 'We can't keep doing this. We need someone else to take it over,'" Carla Fox said.

"It's a little bittersweet. I'm happy right now that I'm not doing all the work. I'm working on my jewelry, and I've got new things happening. I've been working on online classes — I've developed a new in-person class. I teach metalsmithing."

Fox described a recent visit to AHD's home, the Old Mill District — whose staff Art in the High Desert has long enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with, she said — as bittersweet.

"I know that the closer it gets to August, the sadder I'm going to be," she said. "Walking the site and thinking of how wonderful it was, and all the artists, and all the good feelings, that weekend was a real high for us. Maybe we'll go out of town that weekend, or something else."

The Foxes welcome ideas and input for keeping Art in the High Desert alive. In an email to GO!, Carla wrote: "How important is it for AHD to continue? Are others ready to step-up, help, donate money, sponsor? Those interested should email to: info@art-in-the-high-desert.com."

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