

The Spin

September 15, 2005

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Famous people are just more interesting

We've been tipped off that director **Cameron Crowe** booked a last minute in-store at Grimey's at 1 p.m. on Sunday, when he and a "special guest" will be on hand to discuss his new movie *Elizabethtown* and sign copies of the soundtrack. Atlanta band **I Nine**, who are featured on the soundtrack, will play at the appearance, performing a song written by Crowe and his wife, Heart guitarist **Nancy Wilson**, but rumors are circulating that the special guest could be either Wilson or the film's leading man **Orlando Bloom**. Crowe and Bloom will be in Franklin later that day for an invitation-only screening of the film, where fans ostensibly can drool on the red carpet but won't be allowed to actually walk on it.

The return of The Privates and Matt Mahaffey

The **Mike Mahaffey Benefit Show** Saturday at Exit/In was the best damn memorial we've been to in a long time. **The Privates** played their first Nashville show in months, bringing back Features drummer **Rollum Haas** for an awesome performance that reminded us how much we'd missed them since their last gig in April. Even the unenlightened were overheard exclaiming, "I don't know who these

guys are, but they rock!” The real gem of the night was, of course, **Self**, the brainchild of former Murfreesboroan **Matt Mahaffey**, who moved to L.A. five years ago. It’s been so long since Self played here, we can’t even remember when it was. The group has always been more of a one-man project, with Mahaffey playing most of the instruments in the studio and bringing in other musicians for live shows. Saturday’s Exit/In concert was no different—at one point, five people were onstage with Mahaffey. Selfies, as the group’s fans are known, came from all over the country for this one-off show, which featured songs from Subliminal Plastic Motives all the way through Gizmodgery. An encore performance of the anthem “Trunk Fulla Amps” got the booties moving and the arms pumping and made us mourn the fact that it took the death of Mahaffey’s brother to bring Self back to the stage.

A little Dap’ll do ya

Last time they came through town, we heard mad hype on **Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings**. The way people talked about them, you’d think their live show was like Patti LaBelle backed by Steve Cropper, Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, and the Tower of Power horns. You’d expect them to come onstage dressed fresh and clean in peg-leg suits, and that the lead guitarist would step forward and start fast-talking like an MC at a soul extravaganza, hyping up the audience to a fever pitch before breaking into song himself. And that’s pretty much how it was last Thursday at Exit/In. The Daptones’ super soul review was tighter than Michael Brown’s fist around FEMA money—and so so hip we swore they jumped straight here from a 1964 show at the Apollo. The vibrant Ms. Jones wrecked the stage, her braids flowing, belting out tunes in her melodious

roar. Some lucky souls were invited onstage to get sweaty and dance—including one extremely lucky Scene fellow who got to plant a kiss smack on Jones' lips—and that's how the show rolled deep into the night, sweat-soaked and beer drenched.

Round trip

Late on Sunday night, Chestnut Street proved totally empty, save for the eerie sight of Greer Stadium all lit up and devoid of a single person. Undeterred, we kept going until we spied a crowd of people hanging out next to a nondescript concrete box. Ah, this must be 310 Chesnut St., the city's latest music venue (of sorts). Inside, a scattering of people sat on the floor, looking as though they were at some kind of meditation workshop, while Providence, R.I.'s **Urdog** spun long, droning, noodly instrumentals. It was pretty cool for, oh, about three minutes, but each time the band started to taper off, there was that expectation—oh, they're done!—but whoops, no, the jamming would kick back in. If only they'd looked up from their instruments just long enough to notice that people were hoisting themselves up off the floor and heading for the exit. The crowd filtered back in for the headliners, from Finland. **Circle** were a peculiar-looking bunch: one heavy, hairy metal dude on bass, who kissed his instrument at one point; a lithe, severe-looking masked fellow on drums; a scruffy, zonked-looking guitarist; and, at center, on screamo vocals and keyboard, a scrawny man wearing a leather hat and wifebeater, looking for all the world like the star of a low-budget gay porn flick. Their music was a no less curious pastiche: prog, psychedelia, metal, even some kozmic blooze. But the excitement of seeing a band from a chilly, far-off land—in a strange coincidence, the second set of Finns to pass through town last

week—didn't quite extend to their music and, ears ringing into the night, we made our way back across the railroad tracks, past the baseball stadium, into the lonely creep of an approaching Monday morning.

Dispatches from the Americana conference

- Maybe one of the coolest shows during last week's Americana Music Association conference wasn't at a club, but at Grimey's Records, when NYC country singer **Laura Cantrell** returned to her hometown for an in-store last Thursday backed by guitarist **Paul Burch**, bassist **Lorne Rall** and multi-instrumentalist **Fats Kaplin**. As one person there put it, the audience was "more of a Nashville crowd than an AMA crowd." Sure, there were a couple of people in regulation Americana wear—jeans, Western shirt, all-important laminated badge—but the rest of the folks looked like, well, just folks. Cantrell played songs off her third album *Humming By the Flowered Vine*, which came out on Matador Records earlier this year (putting her in the company of other so-called Americana acts like Cat Power and Interpol), and it was a lovely, if too brief set. Grimey's is a fine place to hear music—smoke-free, you're outta there well before 10—so long as you don't mind craning to see around store displays and other customers. But it was hard not to wonder why Cantrell didn't play a regular club gig last weekend. Turns out she had to leave for a string of U.K. dates, but the word is that she'll be back again in November.

- In a week packed with plenty of rootsy music—maybe even too much—**Joy Lynn White** proved once again that she's as good as any country singer in this town during her short set at The Sutler's

weekly “Americana Tonight” show last Wednesday. She also suggested that the term “country,” as flexible as it’s become, may no longer fit her. On the new “Keep This Love” and 1998’s “Lucky Few,” the petite redhead snapped off lines with a formidable fire over taut, roots-rock arrangements reminiscent of early Tom Petty. She played to a packed house full of out-of-town visitors who’d arrived for the AMA conference, all of whom stopped schmoozing to pay attention—a tribute to her gutsy, full-toned alto. Music Row fumbled in letting White go in the ’90s, a point driven home when the Dixie Chicks, whose sound seemed partly modeled on what White had been doing, scored hits by remaking two of her recordings, “Tonight the Heartache’s on Me” and “Cold Day in July.” From the sound of things, her forthcoming indie album *One More Time* has the goods to bring her the wider attention she’s always deserved.

- Americana conventioners got a real treat when Ozark Mountain Daredevils bassist **Michael “Supe” Granda** stormed the stage during **Rick Schell**’s performance at The Sutler last Thursday. Accompanied by an amused Schell and his all-star backing band, the pleasantly impaired Granda tore through an old-school rendition of the Daredevils’ 1973 hit “If You Wanna’ Get to Heaven,” replete with pantomimed juggling moves, akimbo percussion and eyes bugging out. At the song’s raucous finale, Granda yelled, “This shit’s too hard, I quit!” and blew out the door.

INS crimps Aussie Festival

Last weekend’s **Ninth Annual Australian Festival** benefited from a record turnout, with locals and expats enjoying Aussie rules

football, cricket and music by **Pru Clearwater** and **Nessa Morgan**, among others. The festival has become the largest of its kind in North America—no thanks to our Immigration and Naturalization Service, which this year denied visas to two of the event’s headliners, **Ross Wilson** and **Neil Murray**. The pair were barred at the 11th hour on the grounds that the festival had provided “insufficient documentation” to demonstrate that they were culturally significant artists—this despite reams of supporting data and the assistance of immigration specialists, a U.S. congressman and the U.S. and Aussie Chambers of Commerce. In their home country, Ross and Murray are bona fide superstars who’ve maintained successful careers despite a lack of recognition in the Western Hemisphere. “I would liken this to the Australian government knocking back a Visa app from Bruce Springsteen and Guy Clark,” said festival spokesperson John Lomax III. “But that wouldn’t happen, as the Australian government isn’t as lame as ours.”

A vote for Carter

- Local trio **The Carter Administration** have toiled for years now without getting a whole lot of glory—maybe they’re still tainted from that whole Iran hostage crisis. They’ve self-released something like eight CDs, including the brilliantly titled *High on Voting*, but their just-released *Air Guitar Force One* on Theory 8 Records is their first proper album. They’ve always turned out guitar-pop gems that crackle with punkish, angular energy, and on their latest recordings, the hooks sink ever deeper on repeated listens. Live may be the best way to hear them, though, if only because the coiled-up energy in their songs plays out better when there’s an audience to hear

them. The next best chance is this Saturday at the Family Wash.

Good cause

In the aftermath of Katrina, it's easy to overlook the needs of local arts nonprofits, but they need support just as much as before. And the **Nashville Jazz Workshop's** annual fundraiser may at least promise a brief respite from ongoing news from the shattered Gulf Coast. After a wine tasting and silent auction, the heavy hitters on its faculty, including **Jim Ferguson, Jeff Coffin, Rahsaan Barber, Kirk Whalum** and **Rod McGaha**, will start to jam at 6 p.m. this Sunday at the University Club of Nashville. Call 242-5299 for reservations and info.

*Send news, tips, gripes and recipes to
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