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news of week
 news feature
 citizens alert

A&E

arts feature
 week
 best bets
 art
 pop, rock, jazz
 classical
 film
 food

Living

living feature
 mylife
 history 101
 gardening
 peeps

Opinions

angry poodle
 letters
 voices
 in memoriam

Special Issues

Best of SB
 wedding
 summer camp
 after school guide

Advertising Info

rate cards

Contact Us

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**PREVIEW - FRINGE BEAT - STATE -
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Not Hard to Like

Josh Eymann, the Hard to Find Showspace, The Advantage, and Why We Suck

by Paul Rivas

If all you wanted for Christmas was an all-ages music venue featuring indie rock bands with no drugs, alcohol, or violence allowed, then buddy, you wasted your wish—Goleta's Hard to Find Showspace has been exactly such a spot since 2001. Luckily, it's a good time for a wasted wish, since you're just in time to catch the impressive line-up of bands that will be playing the little-known and less-frequented venue this winter. Located in a tiny room way out at 7190 Hollister Avenue and run by Goleta loc Josh Eymann, the Hard to Find opens its 2006 season January 15, with The Advantage—a band that plays strictly Nintendo jams—and I.V. heroes/UCSB grads Kissing Tigers.

With both Eymann and I stuck at our day jobs, the only place we could meet to discuss the Hard to Find and the state of indie rock in Santa Barbara was cyberspace. What follows is my edited email interview with Eymann.

How long have you been organizing shows at the Hard to Find? I grew up here, in Goleta the Goodland. I have organized shows off and on since high school. I started the HTF in December of 2001 [then it was called the Foodbank]. Our first show was the Velvet Teen and a band my brother Tim and I started just so there'd be a local indie rock band on the bill. There were about 12 people there. We didn't want to compete with the Living Room [a now defunct all-ages venue]—we wanted to be their weird, nerdy, less popular cousin that's into bugs and science.

Would you like to see the Hard to Find move to a bigger venue? No. The Living Room was two-thirds empty for almost every show they put on. I like being small; I like that we're in the middle of nowhere; I like that you have to put a little effort out to see the shows. I don't want to be too user-friendly. Hookers are user-friendly. State Street is user-friendly. This town's had enough user-friendliness to choke a bellhop.

The coolest thing about the Hard to Find is that the shows are all-ages. When I was in high school in Noleta, the weird kids who were into cool stuff were always hanging out with others who "go to shows." Are you surprised there aren't loads of people under 21 at your shows, given there's so little for them to do in Santa Barbara after dark? Not really. People enjoy the comfort of being in agreement with their peers. It's what makes something fun for a lot of us—

that's how something like Blink 182 can be foisted on us. There's nothing wrong with that; it's normal. But it does mean that a young mall jockey's not gonna feel like going to most of our shows. Still, a high school kid, like the kids in the band Please and Thank You, can be so much more important to the scene than a transient, two- or three-year college student. I'd gladly trade five college freshmen that show up just to see their friend's band once every six months for two enthusiastic high school kids any day•—•they take the scene and make it theirs instead of wishing they were in L.A. half the time. All-ages crowds just have more energy and less cologne on.

What do you think the potential is for a live music scene in Santa Barbara? The band scene in Santa Barbara, as I have always said, is the worst in America. You may say, "Hey, what about places like Soledad?" and I'd have to admit that it's not really happenin' there, either, but they have an excuse, being so small, and we don't. With all the bars and money and college kids and faux culture running around this town we should be the next Seattle, or at least the next Austin, but we're gonna have to work hard just to be the next Fresno. Toad the Wet Sprocket? Dishwalla? That's all we can turn out? Are we all really that excited about Glenn Phillips still? Are we all on codeine? Hell, The Independent itself, our version of The Guardian or L.A. Weekly, proudly proclaimed Santa Barbara to be kuckoo for cover bands a few months back. That should say it all right there: we're pretty lame, and it's not the bands who live here's fault, it's just this whole fake Monet painting of a town we live in. It sucks all the rock out of our music or something.

What do you look for when you book bands? I don't even care if a band is technically good musicians, just do something with some energy and creativity to it and I'll be interested in giving them a show. It helps if it's a band that can't get a show at the Wildcat or Velvet Jones; I see that as a virtue. I just hate bands that are a copy of a copy of a copy. Like Coldplay. And the only thing worse than Coldplay is a band trying to be Coldplay because girls like Coldplay. Like a couple years ago, the last thing the world needed was another angry white guy in a basketball jersey alternately singing and screaming, being angry and sensitive at the same time, but always misunderstood. It got really bad for a while there, I mean Linkin Park bad.

What about The Advantage? People who went to SOhO to see Pinback were baffled until one of the band members said, after a kick-ass song, "That was the theme from Double Dragon." It was one of the funnest shows I went to last year. I think The Advantage is pretty cool. To be honest, I like Hella a lot more, the other band some of them are in, but, like I said, they are talented and they are doing something interesting. The whole idea of playing Nintendo music sounds like one of those lame musical jokes that's funny the first 10 minutes and a drag the last 35, but these guys really handcraft their Nintendo covers. And you're right, they don't just stand there playing the Mario Bros. theme and snickering at each other•—•they get fierce with their rock. So bada bing, we have ourselves an Advantage concert on January 15. This show should be huge. I read in The Independent that cover bands are really big here.

[pull quote]

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—•Josh Eymann,
Hard to Find Founder

PRJ ReviewS

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fringe beat

Listomania, Cont'd

by Josef Woodard

WRINGING OUT THE OLD YEAR: The calendar turns, and the mind reels and refocuses on a new number and an earnest resolution list. But we're still in the shadow of the old year, trying to shake it off and start anew. To that end, the columnist looks back over another full year of cultural activity in town, where it's now possible to map out fairly solid weeks of live musical nourishment without heading south much (although we're still lacking in a venue catering to the creative riches of indie rock).

As mentioned in this space before, the Venue of the Year award must go to the Lobero Theatre, which hosted an especially broad spectrum of great musical evenings in 2005, from classical piano legend Alfred Brendel to jazz saxophone legend Wayne Shorter to alt-neo-southern-rock-whatever legend-in-training, My Morning Jacket. The Santa Barbara Bowl season got a bit bogged down in yuppieland, but pulled through at the end with head-rattling shows by Bright Eyes and the Mars Volta. Some of us are wondering when the Bowl will finally acknowledge the presence and importance of serious musical culture in that great venue, but that's another story. For now.

SOHo's jazz menu really perked up late in the year. Memorable appearances there included the great and presently underrated trumpeter Wallace Roney (who also stopped at The Mercury Lounge the next night—a rare "Santa Barbara tour"), venturesome and venerable L.A. cornetist Bobby Bradford, Cuban-in-New-York drummer-bandleader Dafnis Prieto, and vocalist favorite Kate McGarry.

Our bold classical culture continued to rely on familiar and reassuring sources—the ever-impressive CAMA, UCSB Arts and Lectures, the Music Academy of the West's summer festival, the fine S.B. Symphony and Chamber Orchestra, and, just over yonder, the Ojai Festival—one of the world's finest.

Submitted for the eclectic reader-listener's approval, here is a subjective list of the 20 most memory-impacting live shows in town, chosen from more than 150 attended. Cutting across genres and listed alphabetically, the list is offered partly as further proof that Santa Barbara has an unreasonably strong cultural pulse for a town its size. It may also give yet another rationale for those of us who are not idle rich/landed gentry to remain in this obscenely overpriced but continually remarkable town, with ears, minds, and hearts perked.

1. Laurie Anderson, Campbell Hall
2. The Bad Plus, Lobero
3. Borodin Quartet, SBMA
4. Alfred Brendel, Lobero
5. Bright Eyes, Bowl

6. Bugallo-Williams Piano Duo, Ojai Festival (Conlon Nancarrow program)
7. Burt Bacharach, Music Academy of the West
8. Eagles, Bowl
9. Emerson String Quartet, Music Academy of the West
10. Stephen Hough, Lobero
11. Biréli Lagrène, with Taraf de Haïdouks, Campbell Hall
12. Bettye LaVette, SOhO
13. Lyle Lovett, John Hiatt, Joe Ely, Guy Clark, Arlington
14. Pat Metheny Trio, Lobero
15. Edgar Meyer, Barton Myers House (UCSB Arts and Lectures' "Chamber Music in Historic Sites" series)
16. Modest Mouse, Arlington
17. My Morning Jacket, Lobero
18. Wayne Shorter, Lobero
19. Tierney Sutton, Lobero
20. Steve Winwood, Chumash Casino

SCREEN GEMS: In the list-making spirit, what follows is one avid filmgoer's Top 10 list of films that made 2005 cinema worth staying awake for.

1. The New World (Terrence Malick)
2. Brokeback Mountain (Ang Lee)
3. Good Night, and Good Luck (George Clooney)
4. The World (Jia Zhangke)
5. Millions (Danny Boyle)
6. A History of Violence (David Cronenberg)
7. June Bug (Phil Morrison)
8. Broken Flowers (Jim Jarmusch)
9. Palindromes (Todd Solondz)
10. Me and You and Everyone We Know (Miranda July)

(Got e? fringebeat@aol.com).

State Street

Rockin' New Year

GET DOWN WITH BROWN: Dubbed the Rolling Stones of country music for its 23 years together, Sawyer Brown is touring to support its 20th album Mission Temple Fireworks Stand. The Florida-bred band, known for its high-energy concerts and down-to-earth attitude, have played more than 3,500 shows, had its albums go gold and platinum, and won numerous country music awards.

Sawyer Brown, which is comprised of lead vocalist Mark Miller, keyboardist Gregg "Hobie" Hubbard, drummer Joe Smyth, bassist Jim Scholten, and guitarist Shayne Hill, was originally discovered on Star Search in 1984, where it won the \$100,000 top prize. That same year it landed a recording contract with Curb Records, where it went on to chart its first single, "Leona." A string of hits followed, including, "Step by Step," "Betty's Bein' Bad," "The Walk," and "All These Years." As such, Sawyer Brown boasts the longest uninterrupted run as a band currently in country music.

Though the music has changed from party-themed songs to more serious songs

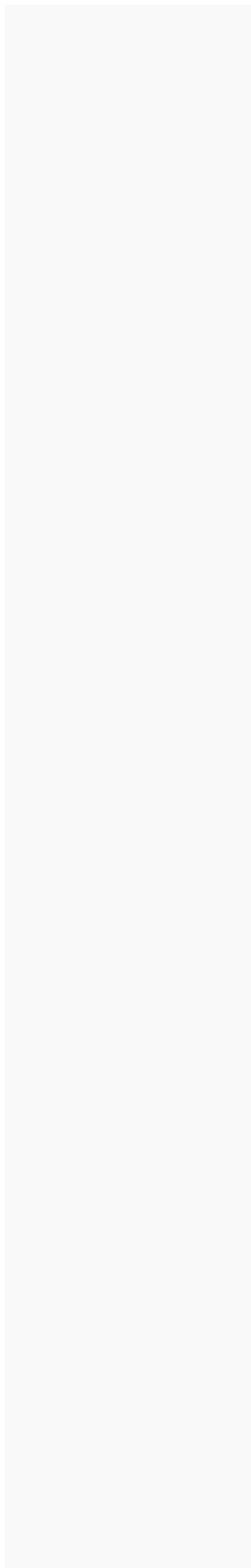
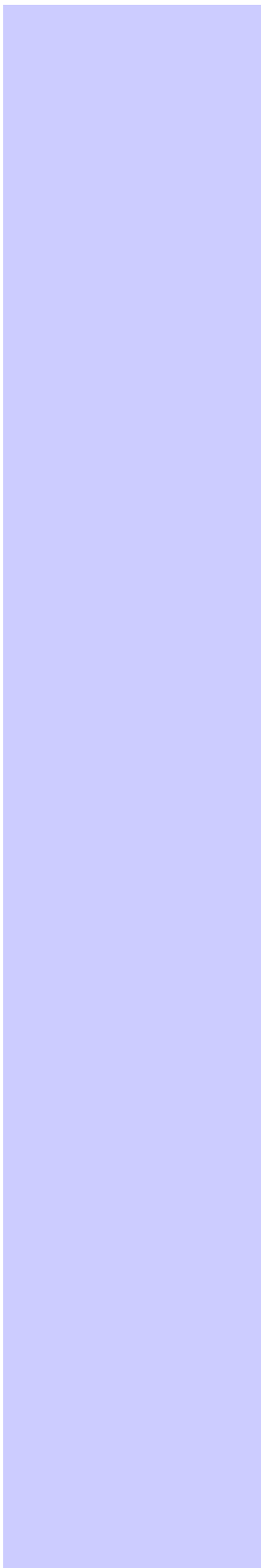
about broken marriages, aging, and unemployment, what hasn't changed is the band's commitment to its fans to give them everything it's got while having the most fun possible. The band will be at the Chumash Casino on Thursday, January 5 at 8 p.m. See chumashcasino.com or call 1-800-chumash. •—•*Rebecca Howes*

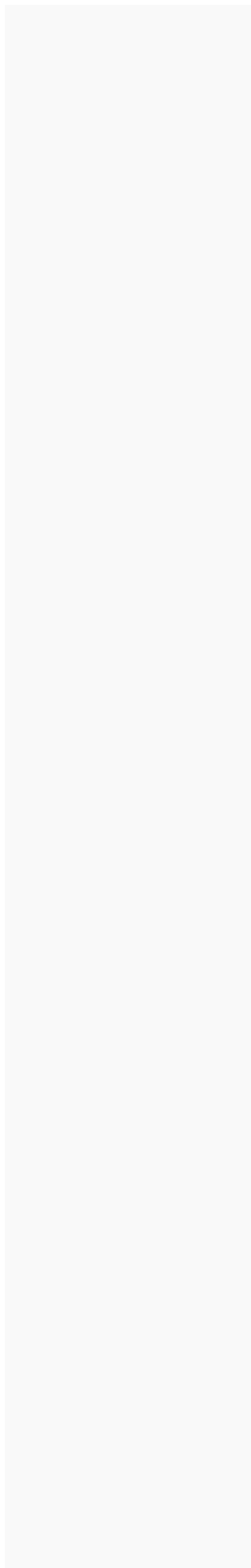
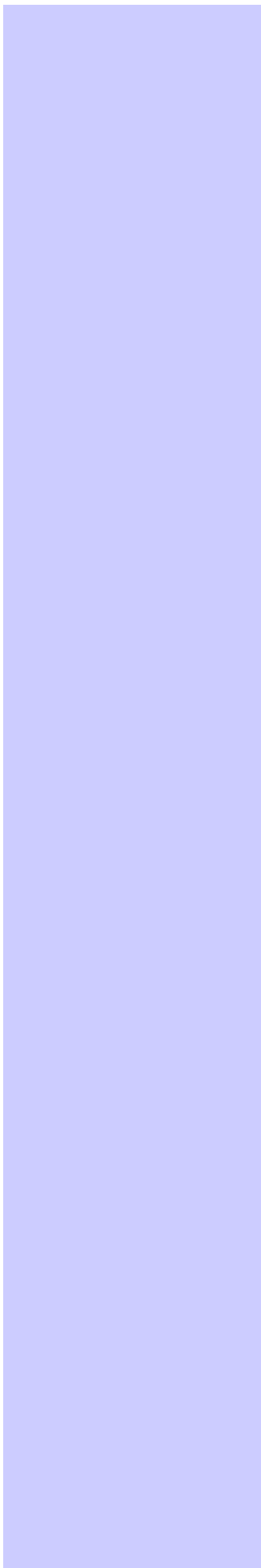
THE DANBURY WAY: There's certainly something to be said these days for a wavering voice, wandering lyrics, and do-it-yourself attitude. That's where Provo, Utah-based songsmith Drew Danburry has found a niche, delivering subdued, shaky, perfectly flawed neo-folk rock in intimate, preferably non-bar venues. Danburry•—•whose two albums *An Introduction to Sex Rock* and *Besides: are we just playing around here or do we mean what we say?* draw countless comparisons to Conor Oberst's *Bright Eyes*•—•is making a pit stop at Morninglory Music on Monday, January 9, at 8 p.m. An avid skateboarder who was born and raised in Huntington Beach, Danburry's shows•—•which tend to be in record stores, parking lots, malls, and other less common music scenes•—•draw a disproportionate amount of skate rats, so beware of unexpected ollies. His growing list of songs•—•each of which is adorned with a usually lengthy title, such as "I thought all my girl problems would go away when I turned gay" and "I am a normal healthy person which means I have a lot of problems"•—•aren't always as serious as his counterparts', but he manages to find the fine line between pain and pleasure. He's worth paying to see, but this time, it's free. •—•
Matt Kettmann

HAWAIIAN JUBILEE: Daniel Ho has come a long way from his humble beginnings in Kaimuki, Oahu. After 15 years of international touring, the talent of the keyboardist/vocalist/producer continues to blossom. Applying his unmistakable high tenor to a wide variety of styles, Ho filters it all through his Hawaiian roots. Launching his career in 1990 with the contemporary jazz group, Kilauea, Ho and Co. got off to quite a start. All six of the albums were very successful•—•two even climbed onto Billboard's Top 10. Accompanying Ho at SOhO on Tuesday, January 10, are two other Hawaiian masters. Keoki "LIKO" Kahomoku is a Grammy Award-winning slack key guitarist. Also a wizard of the ukulele, LIKO's deep-rooted love for the islands resonates with every note. Rounding out the dynamic trio is Herb Ohta, Jr., another Hawaiian Renaissance man of sorts and a shining light amid the new generation of ukulele maestros. •—•
Tyler Blue

MAS MÚSICA: While many clubs are just getting their musical calendars lined up, SOhO, coming off a great 2005, has a full week of music lined up. The highlights start tonight, January 5, with Santa Ynez Valley's Ona and the Giant Squid Show; continue Sunday with acoustic fusion from the Moutin Reunion Quartet; and round up on Wednesday, with finger-picking guitar from Thomas Loeb, Dorian Michael, Andrew Jackson, and Barbara Coventry. And then next Thursday, January 12, prepare for a country rockin' time with the Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash, whose set will be opened with Wil Ridge, whose debut album *Painful* is anything but. •—•*MK*

Sound & FURY





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