



Photo courtesy of Hal Horowitz  
Andy Milne's Dapp Theory brings its propulsive mix of jazz, hip-hop and funk to Bombs Away Cafe at 10 p.m. Thursday, April 10.

## Dancing with Chance

By Jake TenPas  
The Entertainer

*Andy Milne's Dapp Theory keeps each new release and performance fresh*

CORVALLIS — Unlike most danceable music, Andy Milne's funk doesn't beat you over the head. Instead, it sort of sidles up next to you and whispers in your ear.

Pretty soon, your head is nodding, which invariably leads to your shoulders moving. The rhythms spread down your body one part at a time until, before you know it, your feet are shuffling and shaking, twitching and twisting. Looking back, you'll have no idea how you got here.

Fortunately, Milne is in control. He should be. He's played with everyone from New York sax pioneer Steve Coleman to Canadian folk legend Bruce Cockburn.

Weaving a tapestry of complex piano parts, understated but relentlessly grooving electric and acoustic bass, alto and soprano sax and some of the funkier drumming this side of Tony Williams, Milne and his band Dapp Theory are masters of understatement.

Listening to the band's latest release, "Layers of Chance," it's easy at first to focus on the piano and sax solos or the lovely Weather Report-style harmonies that fill the upper register. But underneath it all is the rhythm section of Christopher Tordini and Sean Rickman, tapping, slapping, brushing and beating their way to rhythmic infinity.

"This album that just came out is a huge departure," Milne says. "There's a certain continuum that I'm going for."

The last time the Toronto native brought Dapp Theory through town, it was 2003. Five years ago, the idea of rappers and serious jazz players working together was still a relatively fresh idea. But Milne had already been doing it for nearly five years by then.

Not that it was ever a gimmick or an attempt on his part to incorporate new musical forms into his already stuffed background of acoustic and electric jazz, funk, soul and avant-garde music.

"The motivation was purely based on the people I knew," he recalls of his reason for first bringing an MC into the mix. "As I got into it, I realized the possibility of it."

The man that's been realizing that possibility with Milne for the past six or so years is poet/rapper John Moon, whose flow can range from soft and pensive to stern and righteous, just as his lyrical focus can shift from the intensely personal to the powerfully political.

On the first track off of "Layers of Chance," "After the Fact," Moon raps: "I used to think you were my reason/ The point of breathing/ And eyes for seeing/ The childish dreaming that revealed itself/ When I watched you leaving."

Unlike other instrumental music that features hip-hop style vocalizations, Milne's compositional voice is strong enough to stand up to Moon's lyrics, forcing them to orbit its interstellar body, instead of the other way around. At the same time, while pieces of rock or Middle Eastern or soul or even folk might enter that orbit occasionally, Moon's raps are every bit as integral to the music as Milne's instrumental passages. In other words, there's a balance to the music that is tenuous when considered intellectually, but just plain funky when considered physically.

In the past few years, Milne has been away from Dapp Theory, working on a solo record called "Dreams and False Alarms" and a duet album with harmonica virtuoso Gregoire Maret called "Scenarios," as well as another collaboration with a tap dancer.

He says that each one has informed his approach to his recording and road stints with Dapp Theory.

"Each new thing I went to injects new info in terms of how I can create," he says. "It led me to thinking about writing music that was more textural, but also about my relationship with the piano."

### **CHECK IT OUT**

What: Funky jazz purveyors Andy Milne and Dapp Theory live

Where: Bombs Away Cafe, 2527 N.W. Monroe Ave., Corvallis

When: 10 p.m. Thursday, April 10

Cost: \$10

Information: [www.bombsaway](http://www.bombsaway)

[cafe.com](http://cafe.com) or [www.andymilne.com/](http://www.andymilne.com/)

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