

## Music

# Just ordinary Bobs? Not these musicians

### THE BOBS

8:30 and 10:30 p.m. today and tomorrow, Jazz Alley, 2033 Sixth Ave., Seattle, 206-441-9729. \$13.50-\$17.50. Early shows are all ages, late shows are 21 and older.

The Bobs are like a barber-shop quartet gone completely insane.

Band members Matthew Stull, Richard Greene, Joe Finetti and Amy Englehardt sing intricately structured, meticulously written odes to stupidity. Their latest CD,



Claude Flowers

*Puget Sounds*

"Coaster," couples original material with overhauled — some might say mutilated — renditions of beloved classics.

"Bring to Boil" describes the preparation of noodle soup in scientific terms, pausing for a cry of, "Holy Ramen Empire/ Boiled in a day/ Holy Ramen Empire/ I eat too, Brute." All-vocal arrangements of Duke Ellington's "Caravan" and the Doors' "Light My Fire" would seem blasphemous if they weren't performed with such demented flair.

"Bach to Bach" presents an imaginary conversation between classical composer Johann Sebastian Bach and his wife/secretary, Anna Magdalena. Johann — a father of 17 — is depicted as a wage slave, telling the missus, "I am exalted in the world/ But undercompensated ... / If I could only write a hit like Handel."

Anna is portrayed as a sort of privileged groupie, her husband's biggest fan and most dangerous temptation. In one moment, she's raving about his work. In the next, she's distracting him from it.



The zany Bobs are playing tonight and tomorrow night at Jazz Alley in Seattle.

"Coaster" also features a song cycle about pet turtles. "That Old Swamp (Is Getting Me Down)" describes life in an aquarium: "The water has started to turn brown/ I try to bask on my brick/ they shut the sun lamp off too quick." During "A Vacant Stare," the hard-shelled narrator watches silently as people misconstrue his hunger for affection.

"Rubber Girl" finds the reptilian hero cuddling up to a toy that's been placed in his tank as decoration. When he finally gets a real companion in "Turtle Girl," everything goes wrong. "She mates and then she kills," the Bobs coo. "Fertile turtle girl." It's all extremely goofy.

The quartet's Internet site, [www.bobs.com](http://www.bobs.com), is easy to navigate and fast-loading. It includes

MP3 music files, video footage and a fun collection of autobiographical "Bobtales" describing life on tour.

After trawling through that Web site, fans — especially those with kids — might want to pay a visit to [www.smarterville.com](http://www.smarterville.com), a Seattle-based children's site for whom the Bobs have recorded a variety of songs.