

music

End of Summer Sounds

Our semi-annual roundup of Oregon CD releases

by Brett Campbell

I'm not sure how a band of Oregonians regularly manages to make some of the world's heartiest Celtic music, but Eugene's **Skye** somehow pulls it off with every performance, and their enchanting new CD *Storm Watch* (skyecelticmusic.com) continues the magic. Everything — Michael Waddell's evocative fiddle, the band's lucid arrangements, Glen Waddell's guitars, pipes and mandolin, the upbeat dance tunes — works winningly, but what really melts your heart is the beautifully blended harmony vocals of Letty Wellman and Julia Heydon (both of whom play multiple instruments as well) on standout tracks like "An Paistin Fionn" and "Grey Funnel Line."

In past and present performances, Portland's **Al-Andalus Ensemble** has demonstrated its masterful devotion to the rich, multicultural sounds of 8th through 15th century Spain, when Muslims, Christians and Jews combined to create potent artistic hybrids. But their alluring new *21 Strings* (ALA) finds flamenco guitarist Julia Banze, oud virtuoso Tarik Banzi and violinist Charley Bisharat (from Shadowfax) exploring new territory: original chamber music inspired by the Al Andalus period but speaking appealingly to contemporary ears. Fans of classical and world music will find it irresistible; I can't keep it out of the CD player.

<http://www.eugeneweekly.com/2009/09/03/music2.html>



Al-Andalus Ensemble