

NIGHTLIFE

If you go

The Tumbleweed Wanderers: Thursday, June 11. \$18 advance, \$20 door.
The Independent, 628 Divisadero, S.F. (415) 771-1421. www.theindependentsf.com.

Tumbleweed Wanderers: New album shows evolution of band's style

By **j. poet**

The Tumbleweed Wanderers live up to their name by never staying in one place for very long, geographically or musically. The Oakland band started out busking for morning commuters outside BART stations, during lunchtime in downtown Oakland and by the Ferry Building in San Francisco on weekends. They played acoustic instruments, but their blend of folk, country and '60s soul had a definite rock edge, with a bit of psychedelia lurking in the background.

Touring constantly helped them evolve quickly. After making three albums in a year and a half, they labored over "Realize," the album they'll be introducing at the Independent on Thursday, June 11. The record sees them emerging as a dynamic rock band, waving their freak flag with a sound that updates the wide-open psychedelic sound of '60s San Francisco.

"We went from playing open mikes to playing festivals and theaters," says singer-songwriter and guitarist Jeremy Lyon. "Acoustic material works great on the street, but at festivals where Skrillex and Kanye West are headlining, people drift away when they hear a stripped-down singer-songwriter tune. Our high-energy, epic rock songs translated better, and they're more fun to perform."

Traces of country, folk and New Orleans second line strut still are in evidence on the



Yasamine June / Effective Immediately PR

Tumbleweed Wanderers are Jeremy Lyon (vocals-guitar), Rob Fidel (vocals-guitar-banjo), Patrick Glynn (keys-mandolin) and Greg Fleischut (vocals-bass-guitar).

album, but it's the psychedelic elements that grab your attention. A sea of overdubbed vocals, dense layers of acoustic and electric guitars, and the earthshaking rhythms of Greg Fleischut's bass and Daniel Blum's drumming make "Realize" a mind-altering experience. There's even a string quartet on a couple of tunes.

"We have been road-testing these songs for a while now, so we won't have any difficulty reproducing the album on-stage," says Rob Fidel, the

band's other singer, songwriter and guitarist. "There are a few things that are hard to do because we don't tour with a string quintet or backing singers. If we could afford it, we'd love to have the singers on the road with us. They'd add so much to our live show, and it would make for an exciting change of pace when we'd bring them out onto the stage.

"The album is thicker, darker, heavier and more cinematic than anything we've done before. We believe in the art of

the album and try to create an epic journey for the listener to dive into. That said, 'Realize' also has a lot of quiet, intimate moments to give you time to process the songs that are sonically intense. I like albums that unfold like a movie or play." Lyon chimes in: "We're looking to explore terrain similar to My Morning Jacket or Wilco. They rock, but they also get weird."

J. poet is a Bay Area freelance writer.

CHECK IT OUT

Real Vocal String Quartet: Think you already know what a string quartet sounds like? Think again, or better still, check out the Bay Area's own Real Vocal String Quartet, which has been redefining string quartet and vocal performance for more than a decade. The group returns to Freight and Salvage with the five songs that will make up its next EP, including three by violinist-vocalist Alisa Rose, and one each by violinist-vocalist Irene Sazer and violist-vocalist Matthias McIntire. 8 p.m. Thursday, June 11. \$13-\$25. Freight and Salvage, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley, www.thefreight.org.

— *David Wiegand*

Stern Grove Festival: The 78th season of the admission-free concert series kicks off with the Big Picnic featuring the Doobie Brothers and California Honeydrips. This year's lineup, which runs through Aug. 16, also includes performances by Randy Newman (June 28), Tune-Yards (July 19), Talib Kweli (Aug. 16) and others. 2 p.m. Sunday, June 14. Free. Stern Grove, 19th Ave. and Sloat Blvd., S.F. www.sterngrove.org.

— *Aidin Vaziri*

Point Richmond Music: PRM kicks off its summer concert season with performances on Friday, July 12, featuring the Afro-Samba funk sounds of SambaDá, and American roots music from Tom Rigney & Flambeau. Concerts are free and held on the second Friday of each month, June through September, from 5:30 pm to 7:45 p.m. SambaDá, 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Tom Rigney & Flambeau, 6:45-7:45 p.m., free, Park Place at Washington Ave., Point Richmond. www.pointrichmondmusic.com.

— *David Wiegand*