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JANUARY 29, 2009 ISSUE

Tropic Culture Delivers Feel-Good Funky Latin Fusion at Dragonfly Saturday

Story by David Brewer

The song “Eliminate The Hate” begins with the offbeat strum of an acoustic guitar and a cool burst of muted trumpet before the song’s funky backbeat and unstoppable riff kick in seconds later. The anthem about positive living and tolerance embodies everything that is Charlotte’s Tropic Culture—an award-winning nine-piece band that blends pop, rock, Latin and reggae sounds with flourishes of funk, jazz and more for a big, danceable sound.



Award-winning Charlotte-based band Tropic Culture will bring their Latin-based world dance music to Boone this Saturday, January 31, when they open for the Solos Unit at the Dragonfly Theater & Pub.

This Saturday, January 31, Tropic Culture will perform at the Dragonfly Theater and Pub, opening for Winston-Salem hip-hop funk band and High Country regulars The Solos Unit. The show will begin at 10:00 p.m. and there is a \$5 cover.

Led by Puerto Rican-born singer, guitarist and songwriter Alberto Espinosa and including his brother Jorge and sister Janizel, Tropic Culture’s cross-cultural sound has been taking the Queen City by storm since the band first formed in mid-2006. By early 2007, the band began turning heads, packing clubs around Charlotte including the Visulite Theater and the Neighborhood Theater among others while drawing comparisons to Ozomatli, Manu Chao, Santana and the Dave Matthews Band.

With the momentum building behind the band, Tropic Culture took their horn-powered cross-cultural sound to the Charlotte edition of international band competition Emergenza. The band took top honors, moving on to the next round in Columbia, S.C., where they won yet again. The young band’s run wasn’t over as the nine-piece band won yet again at their third competition in Nashville, Tenn. Tropic Culture’s extraordinary run through Emergenza ended when the band finished second at the regional finals in Atlanta, Ga.

“We were really upset because we wanted to go on to Chicago and then Germany,” said percussionist and violin player Jorge Espinosa, adding that the experience brought the band closer together not only as musicians, but also as friends.

Although the band didn’t win Emergenza, they weren’t done being recognized for their distinctive musical stylings. Last year the band won a Charlotte Music Award as the city’s Best Latin Showcase Artist. Also, their song “It’s Called Love” was included on Creative Loafing magazine’s 2008 compilation CD Homebrew.



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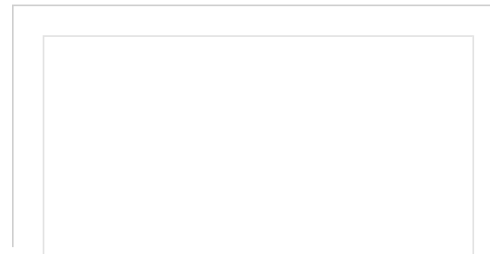
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According to Jorge, the band's growing audiences at their regular live shows in Charlotte have been nearly as diverse as the band's music in both age and ethnicity.

"Last year we played just about every weekend in Charlotte," Jorge said. "[My brother] wants everyone to dance and have fun so people can get out there and jump around."

In addition to this Saturday's show at the Dragonfly with the Solos Unit, Tropic Culture will return to the High Country for a show at Boone Saloon on April 25.

To hear music by Tropic Culture, click to www.tropicculture.com.

Want To Go?

Date: Saturday, January 31

Time: 10:00 p.m.

Location: Dragonfly Theater & Pub

Cost: \$5

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