

tuesday10

CC **A CUSHICLE** Bands with regular engagements are easy to take for granted—until I saw A Cushicle again last month, I'd been telling myself "I'll just catch them next week" for more than a year. But such engagements are perfect for jazz: the musicians get the time and space to develop a deep rapport. This trio of guitarist Jeff Parker, bassist Jason Ajemian, and drummer Nori Tanaka has been playing together at Rodan weekly since 2003, and they've evolved a telepathic connection: they deliver scorching set-long jams, stoked by roiling polyrhythms, that change shape and tone in the most naturalistic, satisfying fashion, and though the music's improvised they'll also work in the occasional standard. Ajemian's deep lines churn and grind, and Tanaka casually inserts funk patterns into a maelstrom of splashy, swinging activity that's at once propulsive and featherlight. Parker has proven his mettle in groups like Tortoise and Isotope 217, as well as in his own diverse projects, and his rangy improvisations ultimately define A Cushicle's sound: he'll lean into a repeated opening motif before suddenly erupting with a clean-lined solo that obliquely references the original pattern, then restate the line in multiple ways. He's just as likely to employ tightly controlled textures—gentle feedback, ghostly harmonics—or ride a meaty riff for minutes on end, but every choice he makes completes the group's sound perfectly, as if he's constantly finding the missing puzzle piece. The trio's shows are enhanced by Selina Trepp's projected computer animations, whose geometric shapes and abstract figures move with the same controlled whimsy as A Cushicle's music. ➡ 10 PM, Rodan, 1530 N. Milwaukee, 773-276-7036. **free** —Peter Margasak