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## Acid Jazz guru's Greyboy All Stars blow through Eureka with Bus Driver leading the way

By Chris Durant

When "West Coast Boogaloo" busted on the scene more than a decade ago I picked it up strictly because it said Greyboy in the title.

I was addicted to DJ Greyboy's "Freestylin'" release and used it to rap over during live shows with my old band, Fatso, before technology caught up with my imagination.

Little did I know that the DJ who unknowingly supplied my beats for live performances, in which there were only a half dozen, recorded on the first record but was not at the forefront of the band that bore his name

It was a real, honest to goodness jazz band, with instruments and everything.

And for the first time since "West Coast Boogaloo" was released the same team is back with "What Happened to Television?", including former James Brown musical director Fred Wesley.

The band usually seen selling out the Fillmore in San Francisco will be in Eureka Monday, March 24 at the Red Fox Tavern.

Though officially not affiliated, how appropriate is it that these stalwarts of the acid jazz, or jazz funk, or soul jazz or whatever the heck you want to call it, (it's always the sign of a great band when you can't pigeon hole them into one genre) open up the week of the Jazz Festival.

"What Happened to Television?", according to the band's website, was written and recorded in a week.

"No one was allowed to bring any ideas that they had in," guitarist Elgin Park is quoted as saying in the band's website. "We had to sit down and all create together."

And in this day and age, when hard drives can have thousands of virtual tracks and with the punch of a button on the keyboard you can turn a saxophone into a gamelan, the band elected to do the entire album old school. The record was recorded live to tape and any edits that were done were done with scissors, not the delete key.

"We were trying to be more composition minded and work on songwriting and song craft," keyboardist Robert Walter is quoted as saying on the band's website. "It was possible that we'd go



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in there and not come up with anything and be sort of stuck with a bunch of material that wasn't really developed. But it flowed."

The record sounds like it took years to compile, taking snippets from different "period" in an experimental band's career.

"How Glad I Am," featuring the vocal stylings of The Living Sisters, a female threesome from Los Angeles is hauntingly addictive. With their smooth voices and the funk grooves of the Greyboy Allstars behind them you can listen to it 30 times in a row. No, believe me, you really can.

In "Give the Drummer Some" you can tell someone in the band used to be part of James Brown's band. Each instrument is featured in a solo welcomed by a chorus "Hold it right there, give the drummer some more because the drummer ain't had none in a long time."

For a band of this caliber to be playing an intimate venue like Red Fox Tavern, any fan of jazz (old or new), funk, soul or hip hop has to pinch themselves.

And now for the Ronco part of the article.

"But wait, there's more."

Opening for the Greyboy Allstars is underground hip hop MC Bus Driver.

His unconventional rhyming style has appeared on seven of his own records, including some on his current label, the once go-to label for punk rock in the 90s, Epitaph.

Bus Driver has also appeared on numerous other artists' albums.

He's a breath of fresh air in a genre that can run together from MC to MC when all of their voices and beats sound the same.

Listening to tracks off of Bus Driver's latest record, "Road Kill Overcoat," gives me hope for modern music, like the same way TV on the Radio did a couple years ago.

This is like one of those rare occasions like when Venus lines up with Mars or like when hippies wear shoes or like when Rob Arkley and Larry Glass meet each other at some sneezeguard buffet somewhere.