



ARTS

Music

Friday, 25th-Saturday, 26th

TODD SNIDER This Nashvillian is the rare live performer whose between-song patter is as trenchant as his music. Not to slight his songcraft, which certainly is stronger than the folkie norm, but Snider's anecdotes, asides and digressions are often remarkable, at once warmly humane and deeply funny. The extended tale that snakes through "The Ballad of the Devil's Backbone Tavern" on 2003's live CD is worthy of prime Richard Pryor. But last year's East Nashville Skyline qualifies as something of a breakthrough, Snider's first collection to distill his gift for candor, back-porch wisdom and insight. The staggering "Ballad of the Kingsmen" is the master stroke, but from an ill-fated trip through Tillamook County to the bemused ponderings of a failed suicide, Snider's writing is sharp and focused. He headlines a weekend of concerts—wryly titled "What the Folk." Hayes Carll (see below) and Jeff Austin of the Yonder Mountain String Band open both shows, along with Tommy Womack on Friday and Adrienne Young on Saturday. Belcourt Theatre —*Scott Manzler*