

indie rock community as a pleasant DIY alternative to typical deep-pocket promotion and distribution practices in the mainstream music world.

According to the band's semi-official Web page, www.geo.cities.com/theswallowspx, the pair are hard at work challenging themselves to follow their successful debut release with a new sound projected to emerge by the end of this year on another fledgling label, Church of Girl Records. They perform Oct. 25 at Rotture before their Siren Nation appearance.

Myshkin's Ruby Warblers is the brainchild of no-surname-necessary Myshkin, who grew up in the Midwestern United States and the Netherlands. Her Dutch parents spent their childhood in a country under foreign occupation. Myshkin studied theater, taught herself guitar, and traveled and lived all over the United States, working as a cabbie, baker and painter, all the while writing. She landed in New Orleans in 1993, determined to work out how to sing for a living. During the diligently creative decade she spent there, she performed on average 300 nights a year, released six records, recorded with dozens of artists in several bands and toured tirelessly on three continents. Among the albums she released during this time are *Myshkin Impossible* and *Why Do All the Country Girls Leave?* Myshkin's music is jazzy folk-rock that also includes elements of cabaret, blues and East European gypsy music, and she has been hailed as her generation's Joni Mitchell: quietly militant, both lyrical and political, with a dark sense of humor and a sultry, vintage-sounding voice.

By 2002, having achieved legendary status in the Big Easy, Myshkin transplanted herself to Portland to pursue her individual musical vision. That year saw the release of the first album under the name Myshkin's Ruby Warblers, *Rosebud Bullets*, her bittersweet farewell to Louisiana. In Portland she met Sailor Banks, now her partner both personally and artistically, who joined the Ruby Warblers as bassist in 2004. (She also records under the *nom de rock* Sugar ShortWave.) The Warblers released the full-length *Corvidae*, Myshkin's encomium to her new Northwest home, that year. One reviewer called *Corvidae* "every bit as creatively challenging as a Radiohead album, sans the 6,000 layers of instruments." The addition of drummer Leila Chieko in 2005 rounded out the band. Last year saw the release of an EP, *Sigh Semaphore*, composed of seven quiet, hard and gorgeous political songs about lying leaders, stolen resources and drowning cities.

Swan Island is an all-female rock quintet whose musical palette encompasses show tunes, black metal, dance-punk and others beside. These swaggering ladies' musical pedigree

would include Sleater-Kinney and Team Dresch, but also Black Sabbath and The B-52's. A reviewer for *Spin* said, "They seem to embody every surface description of feminist punk all at once: butch and femme, political and fanciful, arty and breathy." Drummer Vera Domini (Menagerie) and guitarist Aubree Bernier-Clarke (Half-Seas-Over) started the band in March 2004. Guitarist Torrence Stratton, vocalist Brisa Gonzalez and bassist Bob E. Kendrick joined soon after the band formed. Swan Island has performed with Sleater-Kinney, Mary Timony, LKN, Tracy and the Plastics, The Gossip and others on the West Coast. Last summer it performed at the weeklong Homo-a-Go-Go festival in Olympia, Wash.

The band's MySpace page waxes apocalyptic: "The earth truly seems on the verge of sliding into total breakdown. As we cannot rely on the Man to come up with a plan, we can at least have a good soundtrack to the collapse." But such nihilistic sentiments are balanced by a strong streak of utopian escapism and belief in rock music and dancing as forces of transformation. Bernier-Clarke sums up Swan Island's credo as follows: "There are so many ways we perceive the world these days that there is no objective reality. So you might as well create your own fantasy world."

Mirah Yom Tov Zeitlyn, one of the most eclectic and unpredictable of the Northwest's rockin' ladies, was born in 1974 in Philadelphia. She records and performs simply as **Mirah**. At age 12 she appeared on the television game show *Double Dare*. She began singing and performing at 18 when she moved to Olympia and attended Evergreen State College. To date she's released five albums under the über-cool, Olympia-based K Records label. Among her close friends is Phil Elverum of The Microphones and Mount Eerie, a longtime musical collaborator. She has worked extensively with the Black Cat Orchestra, a Seattle outfit formed in 1991 that played everything from weddings and bars to silent films and NPR's *This American Life*. Mirah was also previously a member of The Drivers, an all-girl Olympia band. She released her first EP, *Storageland*, on Yoyo Recordings in 1997 and joined K Records in 1999.

Mirah claimed a prominent place in the vibrant Northwest independent music scene with her full-length album *You Think It's Like This but Really It's Like This*, released by K Records in 2000. A collection of her own four-track recordings alongside collaborations with Elverum, the album became an instant classic. 2003 saw the release of *Songs from the Black Mountain Music Project*, the result of a self-imposed artists-in-seclusion collaboration with Brooklyn-based artist



Myshkin's Ruby Warblers



Swan Island

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