

Fem Folk Rocks

Imagine what would happen if one of the Indigo Girls had a lovechild with Ani DiFranco, and she was raised by Alanis Morissette. I'm thinking that the child's name would be **Joanne Rand**.

Little Joanne wouldn't have quite the talent of her mothers, and she might be a little overtly optimistic to counter the music of her cynical foster mother. Nevertheless, she would be musically endowed, especially with the guitar, and because it's in her DNA, she'd have a tendency to lean toward the folk-inspired women's empowerment theme. One of Joanne's mothers, Ani, would bestow upon her daughter the gift of a vibrant and powerful voice. Joanne's other mother — either one of the Indigo Girls — would pass on her ability of creative and sometimes epic songwriting.

But this situation is purely hypothetical.

The real Joanne Rand, although a good fit for the description above, probably had parents who weren't musical superstars. Growing up, Rand did cultivate a love of nature and the outdoors, and after leaving her native Georgia at 16, has been touring the Northwest as an acclaimed singer/songwriter for more than 15 years. Rand will be performing a CD release show tonight for her eighth album, *Where Our Power Lies*.

If you can get past the obvious influence of other women's folk rock (particularly that of

Joanne's hypothetical mothers), the album is quite insightful and well-crafted. Rand has an ability to pull the listener into the song through her lyrics. Interestingly (and sometimes distractingly) versatile, Rand's voice can take on a sometimes loving, sometimes fierce tone. This aids in the earnestness of the songwriting; even though her lyrics are insightful, they provide their wisdom through a slightly exaggerated hopefulness that can grate on the listener's nerves. Let me put it this way: If you're depressed and in the need of a pick-me-up, and you've lost your copy of *I'm OK, You're OK*, Rand is the perfect artist for you. Joanne Rand plays at 9 pm at Sam Bond's, Thursday, July 14. — *Emily Freeman*

Right at Home

Amy Ray, one half of the folk duo the **Indigo Girls**, knows Eugene. And Eugene knows her. In this politically active town, where folks are as likely to rally to save a meadow as defend the helpless, the sometimes political message of the Indigo Girls is a good fit. "Eugene is more known to us as a political town than a music town," Ray said. "The identity for us is more than just music. Still, we get great crowds."

Singers/songwriters/guitarists the Indigo Girls have been unleashing song after song, album after album at us for almost 20 years. "We write all our songs separately," Ray says, "We live in different towns, and don't see each other much when we're not touring." In fact, Emily Sailors (the "other" half) has her hands in the food business and has just written a book with her father. Ray, meanwhile, has recently released her second solo album. "When I played Portland," she said, "the crowds were small, yet mighty." The Indigo Girls are still doing their thing together. Their most recent release, *Rarities*, is a stunning collection of originals and bold covers. Live tracks with Ani DiFranco and Michael Stipe round out the collection. While the Indigo Girls have released eight critically acclaimed studio albums, their live shows take the music to another level.

Known for having guest musicians at their concerts, the Indigo Girls refuse to stay still. Reinventing old classics like "Closer to Fine" or taking a turn deep into Elton John's back catalog, they know how to keep it fresh. Aside from their music, their work



The Shapeshifters

on women's issues throughout the years is recognition-worthy and stands alone. Besides the occasional benefit concert, they strive to keep the two sides separate. "Our shows are pretty much a music event," Ray says, "We have rarely experienced any incidents due to our social stances. We have sort of weeded out the curious and have a certain fan base now. People know who we are." The Indigo Girls play with Girlyman 6 pm, Friday, July 15 at the Secret House Vineyard in Veneta. \$33 adv/\$36 dos. — *Jeff Winicour*

The Shapeshifters Get Disco On Your Ass

To get a good sense of the **Shapeshifters'** tongue-in-cheek take on hip hop check out their new video for the single "Circuit City." Taken from their new album, *Was Here*, "Circuit City" features an infectious dance/club groove unlike anything coming up from the hip hop underground. With a disco hook wrapped loosely around Eddie Grant's *Electric Avenue*, "Circuit City" visually spoofs all manners of '80s kitsch from Max Headroom to He-Man.

Similar to their early work, "Circuit City" and other tracks on *Was Here* feature the same goofy, sci-fi, dictionary rap lyricism as, say, tracks like "Farmer Market of the Beast" (which for some reason saw this line strung together: "Willy Wonka totally bonkers, bananas, Hanna-Barbera, Thundar the Barbarian burstin' out the sanitarium"), from the legendary underground hip hop comp *Beneath the Surface*. The Shapeshifters' languid parody of hip hop's socially conscious seriousness and gangsta thuggery has served them well, transforming their obscure cornball raps into slick and funky, yet totally humorous,

indie-rap masterpieces.

Quietly, since the mid-'90s, the Shapeshifters have built a worldwide cult following from the ground up. Running in the similar circles as the Freestyle Fellowship and the Project Blowed camp, and with connections to the LA graffiti crew CBS (the Cali Bomb Squad), the Shapeshifters helped raise the world's eye to Southern California's burgeoning underground hip hop scene.

The eight-member strong collective featuring AWOL One, Existereo, Die Young, Life Rexall, Akuma, Radioinactive, Circus and L.A. Jae came together through pre-existing collectives like the Live Wires and the Chain Smokers. According to Die Young, the Shapeshifters formed almost by happenstance. Poor concert logistics saw their disparate groups lined up with overlapping sets and they just kind of ran with it.

"They would put us all on stage at one time. Then the people started calling us the Shapeshifters," he says.

Between releasing their six studio albums, each Shapeshifter has had some hand in a solo project or collaborative album with other underground hip hop stars such as Abstract Rude, Omid and Daddy Kev. With groupies waiting in the wings, the Shapeshifters' loyal cult following helped the group focus and live almost entirely on their music.

"I've kind of been living off my music for the last two years," Die Young says. "Finally everyone now is not working a regular job and we're able to all tour together."

The Shapeshifters will be performing with longtime ally 2Mex. Soundproof and Jimmy Frank will share the bill at 9:30 pm Saturday, July 16 at the WOW Hall. \$8 adv/\$10 dos. — *Steve Sawada*

LIVE! @ THE JUNGLE

THURSDAY, JULY 14 NORTHWESTBEAT PRESENTS

THE BEAT FEATURING LIVE PERFORMANCES FROM THE LIKES OF: SINGERS, EMCEES, B-BOYS, DJs, FASHION MODELS

THURSDAY, JULY 28 LEGENDARY WORLD BEAT PERFORMER

FEMI KUTI

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE JUNGLE, JOE'S BAR & GRILLE, TICKETSWEST, FASTIXX, CD WORLD, HOUSE OF RECORDS, AND FACE THE MUSIC.

23 WEST 6TH, EUGENE (541) 338-9000 INFO

JAGUAR PRODUCTIONS

COORS LIGHT

WE'RE COOLER THAN EVER.

NEW AIR CONDITIONING

Larry and Luna's

Coconut Bliss™

10 Gelato Flavors

NOW OPEN EVERYDAY 'Til 11:00 PM

Sweet Life

755 Monroe St. • 683-5676 • www.sweetlifedesserts.com