



Saucy Monkey

Saucy and Yummy

From the get go, **Saucy Monkey** is luscious, sassy and so much fun you just want to throw it into the car stereo, roll down the windows and crank the volume. Who cares that it's winter in Oregon and it's probably pouring rain – this music can take every watt you've got.

It's fun like cherry bomb lip gloss is fun; the way clubbing all night with your friends is fun; the way flirting and feather boas are fun. And guys, just in case you think there's nothing here for you, they do a really fast, rowdy cover of the Dinvy's "I Touch Myself."

Admitting how much I love their second album, *Turbulence*, is almost like admitting a dirty little secret, the kind I'd tell my best friend with a nudge and a wink. Because while some folks might characterize Saucy Monkey as pop punk with an edge, it's really just pure, unadulterated, bubble gum pop with the pink sweetness in all the right places.

Think PJ Harvey, Garbage, No Doubt, Liz Phair, the Pretenders, even maybe the Go Go's at their most boisterous, playful and fun. Lead singers Cynthia Catania and Annmarie Cullen (who's originally from Ireland) belt out their dangerously seductive tunes with the skill of urban street sirens. "Good Day Down," their big hit single, simply rocks. As good as it is, it pales next to the superb brilliance of "Disco Ball," a song that starts with Cynthia singing the breathy, rich first verse leading into the chorus, which breaks through like a wrecking ball of heavy guitar and multi-layered vocals.

Saucy Monkey play with openers Venice Maki and Camille Bloom 7:30 pm on Thursday, Nov. 17 at Cozmic Pizza.

– Melissa Bearns

The World Is Ready For disappear fear

What do Bonnie Raitt, Johnette Napolitano, Patti Smith and **SONiA** Rutstein have in common? They're all panelists at Seattle's Rockrgl Conference, held November 10-12. At the conference SONiA shared her 14 years of experience as a touring musician with her band **disappear fear** while mingling with musicians, journalists, label founders and marketing execs – all female. "Patti Smith and Bonnie Raitt are two women in music who have made great contributions so this is really an opportunity to honor them and speak with them," said SONiA, by phone

from the conference. "Women from, really, all over the world are attending it."

SONiA and disappear fear are touring to release their new CD, *DF05 Live*, 20 tracks meandering through folk, blues and rock territory. Recorded live at huge festivals and small listening rooms throughout the country, *DF05 Live* includes both originals and classic protest songs (Phil Ochs' "Is There Anybody Here," for instance).



SONiA Rutstein

The band is celebrating a strong new lineup too. Laura Cerulli both drums and sings, while Angela Edge adds bass and trumpet to SONiA's lead vocals, guitar, harmonica and piano. With her long blond dreadlocks, ripped jeans and gentle-but-tough activist ethic, SONiA and the band continue to inspire audiences the world over, urging them to take pride in who they are, stay strong, and never stop pointing out injustice.

SONiA and disappear fear play 8 pm, Thursday, Nov. 17 at Sam's Place. \$3.

– Vanessa Salvia

Road Trip

Sure, geologists turn into internationally successful singer/songwriters all the time. But not without some kind of major epiphany – an epiphany that leads the individual from that confined world of charts and graphs into the free world of bars and measures.

For **Laura Veirs**, the epiphany included dysentery.

During a collegiate geology expedition to China, Veirs got incredibly ill, probably from drinking unpurified water. As she and her guide crossed the Kunlun mountain range, north of the Himalayas, she repeatedly had to dismount her donkey and vomit. Then the donkey would run away. She'd finish up then go chase it down again. "It seems funny now but I really thought I was going to die," she says.

Veirs, now touring in support of her second album on Nonesuch Records, *Year of Meteors*, delivers a soft electric sound driven by catchy bass lines and her fascinating, sciencey lyrics. An abundance of natural imagery combined with futuristic effects give her songs a Flaming Lips-like feel of weirdness and intrigue.

Add to that a unique perspective on the world, stemming from her parents' insistence on family road trips every summer as a child. "I think that definitely had an impact on my philosophy," she says. "It instilled a real appreciation for me and my brother of the natural world."

Veirs moved to Seattle where she landed a job as a music teacher and started writing. "I thought I wanted to be a writer and I turned into a songwriter," she says. "It was more like, 'Let me try this out. The songwriting thing is fun, let's see where it goes.'"

Songwriting first took her to Europe where her experimental, modern folk sound caught on quickly. Two albums later, the U.S. is starting to catch on. Veirs says that her music is still progressing and with added label support she has more time to focus on writing. By the time her current national tour ends in late January, you should plan on hearing a lot more about her.

Laura Veirs plays with opener Great Lake Swimmers 9 pm, Thursday, Nov. 17 at Sam Bond's Garage. \$5. – Danny Cross

Giving Punk the Fingers

At age 17, Devon Williams was making a name for himself leading the punk band Osker, the youngest band on Epitaph, a label that included NOFX and Rancid. While Osker's music sold well and received some critical praise, the band quickly became known as "Epitaph's Most Hated Band." It wasn't that Williams was a bad guy, per se, but incidents like insulting NOFX on stage before opening for the veteran band reinforced a young punk image Williams and his band seemed to embrace.

But then a weird thing called maturity started its slow climb into the consciousness of Williams, and things changed ... drastically. Osker dismantled, Epitaph lost a moneymaker, and Williams did an about-face and abandoned punk music.

"It got really old being the most hated band on Epitaph," says Williams, very politely. "[Punk] sort of applied to me at the time. I guess I just got tired of it. It's like a yearbook picture. You like it one year – maybe not the next."

The end of Osker was by no means the end of Williams' career as a musician. He

formed **Fingers Cut Megamachine**, and critics have compared his new sound and style of songwriting to Bright Eyes' Conor Oberst. Others have written that Williams is part of a new "indie-folk country" movement. His label has called his music "freak folk."

"That's a thing that the label does," Williams says. "They have to call it something to sell it. You can call it whatever you want, because it'll probably be something different tomorrow."

But let's get down to brass tacks. Where does a name like Fingers Cut Megamachine come from? "I got it from a book," says Williams. "Now I realize it's a pretty stupid name."

Peep the Fingers game with Saltlick and Half Acre Day at 9:30 pm Friday, Nov. 18 at Sam Bond's. \$5. – Tim O'Rourke

PB Wolf, Legends, and Aceyalone Return

Through a prolific schedule of dependable releases, Stones Throw Records has solidified their position as one of the premier indie-hip hop labels around. To top it off, they're still based on the West Coast! But any true hip hop veteran will tell you that Stones Throw has been rocking the scene since 1996. Striking the fancy of the uber-hip critics at Pitchfork as well as the "six months behind" crew at Rolling Stone, it seems as if Stones Throw, with its stable of notable resident artists, has crafted entirely new lenses in which we can view hip hop.

Amidst the jiggification of hip hop, the label incessantly pushed a groove-laden, sample-based sound that paid homage to classic funk and soul from the past, all the while still clinging to a raw sound. Behind the much-deserved hype sits DJ, producer and label manager Chris Manak, aka **Peanut Butter Wolf**.

In the late '90s, the upstart DJ paired up with MC Charizma and eventually landed a record deal with Hollywood Basic



Devon Williams

records, a former Disney subsidiary. Before Charizma and PB Wolf could release a full-length album, their deal with Disney went sour and the label folded. The duo continued to develop their sound, but their career was cut short after Charizma was shot dead in front of a San José church. One of the tracks recorded during their

time with Hollywood Basic, "My World Premiere," would eventually become the first single released on Stones Throw. The label issued what would have been the duo's major label debut album, *Big Shots*, in 2003.

Although I can't tell you the last time PB Wolf visited Eugene, I do know you could squeeze about five **Living Legends** performances and 15 **Aceyalone** visits into that empty space. Although the aforementioned performers deserve the love, PB Wolf is the one to catch.

Living Legends, Aceyalone, Peanut Butter Wolf and One Block Radius play 9 pm Saturday, Nov. 19 at the McDonald Theatre. \$18 adv., \$20 dos. – Steven Sawada