

Fortier Fortifies His Forté

If **Tyler Fortier** has learned anything from his first experience in the studio setting (where he recorded last year's *When the Sun Hits the Water*), he's learned that he wants to be more like Ryan Adams, less like matchbox twenty. He describes *When the Sun* as "very tedious" to make, admitting that he "didn't really know what [he] wanted out of the record." So when it came time to record songs for his debut's companion album, *drunk*, Fortier stayed home. "There is a certain quality or characteristic [in home recording] that is really unique that doesn't really get conveyed in the studio," he says.

Recording the "rough cut" album after the polished album is a concept seen more and more in the age of Pro Tools and home studios, and it has paid off for Fortier in dividends. Gone are the corny references to candles in the wind and the "All You Need is Love" clichés of the first album. Fortier strips away the soft rock balladeer antics for the more ripped-jean punk-folk of, natch, Ryan Adams. While still baring his soul, he does it with less processed cheese and more personal energy.

Fortier says he performed all the vocals and guitar in a "one take fashion ... mistakes or not." Naturally, some guitars sound out of tune, apparently part of the rough cut package. My only gripe is that, for a home recording, it's still highly polished (it was engineered and mixed with help from the Ingredients' Jon Timm), so the rough edges are more jarring. That said, *drunk* showcases Fortier's forté: strong guitars, melt-your-heart lyrics and snappy, dancing-in-the-dark prairie ballads.

In addition to Adams, Fortier adds Jackson Browne, Tom Petty, Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen to his list of influences on *drunk*. Certainly Springsteen's *Nebraska* era can be heard in "Away from the Sun," the road-tripping country lullaby with lines that are easy to place. "Trains follow me through the hills," Fortier sings, "like shadows afraid of the sun."

Fortier's acoustic guitar and harmonica prowess is put on full display with "Fields Flooded (Where You Go)," complete with backing vocals that sound distinctly feminine (but are really a mash-up of Fortier's and Timm's vocals). "That was supposed to be a secret," says Fortier. "How lame." However it got made, Fortier's *drunk* won't be kept secret for long. — *Chuck Adams*

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

The Ovulators Return

It's been a busy year for **The Ovulators**. The Eugene quartet is back on tour to promote their first full-length, self-titled, barely finished album, released last summer. But in the midst of promoting the record, another opportunity arose: The Ovulators reprised their roles as the backing band (and more) in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, brought back to life at Lord Leebrick Theatre. A 2004 Actors Cabaret production of the rock 'n' roll musical garnered wide acclaim and won *EW*'s Best Theatrical Performance that year; the 2007 show again received rave reviews during its four-week February run.

These feisty females have come a long way since 2002, when the original band members met as co-workers at a local vegetarian fine dining restaurant and started jamming together after work. Within a couple of months, they performed their first show under the name The Super Dupers. "It was huge!" guitarist Tina Gnosis says of the amazing audience response. Soon after, they changed their name to The Ovulators, donned punk-glam attire and were soon getting regular gigs at venues across town.

"A big part of our band has been live performances," Gnosis says, adding that while the new album captures The Ovulators' diverse sound — which their MySpace page likens to "a glitter rock enema" — it doesn't compare to the energy and interactive dynamic of their live shows. Gnosis says what makes their band unique is the diversity in their sound: Each member writes songs and contributes individual flavor influenced by butt rock, pop, indie and punk. "It's hard to define our style," Gnosis says. "I don't know what it is, but it's pretty special."

Just returned from a mini Bay Area and southern Oregon tour, the Ovulators continue to promote their album, released by local record label Happy Mistake Records. On April 27, they will perform at the OUTLOUD festival at McDonald Theatre. But the Ovulators are looking ahead at some new projects and exciting changes, including a recording collaboration with Peaches' guitarist Radio Sloan in Portland this September. "We're really psyched!" says Gnosis, who — surprise! — is expecting a baby boy in mid-July. — *Nicole Fancher*



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