



Girlyman (pictured), Chris Pureka
7 pm Sunday, April 15
John Henry's
\$15.50 adv., \$17 door
21+ show

Centrifugal Forces

Tight harmonies lead group's third CD

"When it's a clear day in the Pacific Northwest and those massive volcanic mountains pop up, I love that," says Girlyman founder Nate Borofsky. At the time, it's freezing in Brooklyn and 75 degrees in Eugene. Er, maybe that weather will return for Girlyman's visit to Eugene April 15. But no matter what, Girlyman members know how to take the good with the bad and how to deal with change.

Girlyman, which formed when singer-songwriter Borofsky moved into a Brooklyn apartment with singer-songwriter friends Ty Greenstein and Doris Muramatsu, begins a tour in Seattle Friday night with the release of *Joyful Sign*. The group's third CD, *Sign* contains the mix of ethereal harmony and clever wordplay that has earned the group headlining status after several years of opening for acts like the Indigo Girls and Dar Williams. And the group is moving on in other ways: Everyone's getting out of the apartment, which Borofsky says is now "a bit cramped and crowded." Muramatsu will stay in Brooklyn, but Greenstein and Borofsky are moving, separately, to Atlanta. Girlyman plans to stay together, Borofsky says, but the new album signals the change with the theme of the title song: "Leaving is a joyful sign."

On the new album, as on the band's previous releases, Girlyman sometimes sounds like a three-person Simon and Garfunkel (particularly on "Sunday Morning Bird") and often like their folkie colleagues the Nields. Wistful slower tunes like Muramatsu's bittersweet

"Carols at Christmas" and Greenstein's anguished "Easy Pearls" provide a breath between the bouncy, energetic, often banjo-focused songs that Borofsky and Greenstein write together. But those are the strongest songs on the album, songs that not only belong on any "get your ass in gear" playlist but also provide moments of transcendent pleasure. The lyrics of "Joyful Sign" play with language and flit from self-reflective commentary on rhythm to wry acknowledgement of being in love with someone "like the sun / You rise and shine, but you're not mine / You shine on everyone." And "Through to Sunrise," which combines words about Sept. 11 with a driving, drinking-song sound, keeps toes a-tappin' even as it acknowledges life's crazy mix of grief and bliss.

One emotional core of the album must be "Reva Thereafter," a song Borofsky introduced at Luna last November by telling the backstory: His grandmother, who was dying, decided that she would control the process herself, and after one last holiday with her family, took her own life. Reva, whom Borofsky described as a vibrator-using, pot-smoking role model, left behind loss and joy. Many people come up to speak with Borofsky after Girlyman sings "Reva," he says, most of them with similar stories. "But the heart of the song is losses, celebrating someone you've lost."

As the members of the group take their separate paths out of what "Through to Sunrise" calls their "Brooklyn dive," Borofsky says, the change "leaves room for something new and exciting to come up." **EW**

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