

In Transit

Unlocking the mysteries of Faun Fables

As key players in the recent "Wyrd Folk" resurgence, Faun Fables' acoustic sorcery taps into a mystic vein once mined by revered cult artists such as Pentangle and Comus. Faun Fables originally formed as a solo vehicle for the multi-talented Dawn McCarthy, but she soon joined forces with Nils Frykdahl, also of the outlandish performance rock ensemble Sleepytime Gorilla Museum. The duo's most recent recorded offering, 2006's *The Transit Rider*, doubles as a high concept stage drama that was performed in its entirety during their last tour through the region. Here's our Q&A with McCarthy.



Do you have a secret, or not so secret, past with musical theater?

Internally, I could always relate to life as a musical. It seemed quite true, realistic. I could always imagine a musical/lyrical accompaniment to life, like a constant soundtrack. I read plays in my room and loved stories on tape/LP. I grew up in a town, Spokane, Washington, that didn't have enough theater outlets to have a real involved extroverted past with it. But I did whatever children's summer theater workshops I could grab and studied some classical acting training with a few private teachers thanks to my dad's appreciation of theater as this classic art

How did you and Nils Frykdahl start collaborating?

We first met at an arts festival 10+ years ago. He was performing with his band Idiot Flesh — the most bizarre, theatrically integrated rock 'n' roll show I'd ever seen — and I was there doing some yodeling acts with a NYC circus sideshow. A year or so later, he came out to New York when I'd just returned from travelling overseas. We had a mutual admiration society and wanted to work together. It seemed quite unlikely at the time, considering how different our music sounded from the

other's, but that's why the collaboration excited us so much.

What's the creative dynamic between like between the two of you?

Nils has a great sense of overall sweep and momentum in music/songs, a great quality in an instrumentalist and collaborator. My writing is quite rooted. He likes to throw all kinds of things in off center of the music, pushing its momentum and tension. It's important I work with collaborators that can move inside the places my songs inhabit.

What's on the horizon for Faun Fables?

I am working on new songs and my next theater show. I am writing the songs with the physical performance in mind. Lots of percussion and choreography and possibly having some instruments made for it. I'm excited to branch out. In a way, it's a bit daunting because there are so many options, it feels as if the whole world is open before me. But again, I want the tempo to be legato, just take it all a day at a time.

EW

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