



Kris Delmhorst

Brand New CD, Vintage Sound

Doesn't it seem like I just wrote about Americana/folkie singer-songwriter **Kris Delmhorst**? Well, that was last November when she played a double bill at the WOW Hall with Erin McKeown. The two friends (Delmhorst was taking a break from recording an album in McKeown's house while McKeown was on tour) now play in distinctly different styles, so that event demanded musical flexibility from fans who only knew one of the singers. Still, I've seen Delmhorst hold the attention of thousands of people on hot summer folk festival afternoons (with her *fiddle*, no less), and I've seen her enchant folks crowded into tiny, smoke-filled venues. No smoking in Eugene, of course, but I definitely hope a crowd streams in for the show. Delmhorst kicks off March at the WOW Hall again with a gig in support of the album she recorded at McKeown's, *Shotgun Singer*. She previewed a few new songs in November, like the dreamy, Beth-Orton-like "Blue Adeline" and "Midnight Ringer," a lovely, hopeful song. Like most musicians, Delmhorst prefers to play her newest songs – so even if you're dying to hear "Garden Rose" from 2001's *Five Stories*, she's probably going to give you the new "Freediver" instead. Luckily, Delmhorst retains the ability to combine elliptical lyrics with a voice that ranges from smooth mumbling to lyrical soaring to whiskeyish growling, and that makes the new songs easy to take.

At the concert, be sure to listen for the poppy, sweet "1000 Reasons" (maybe she'll ask the audience to clap in syncopated rhythm) and the spare, aching "Birds of

Belfast." Delmhorst, perhaps jokingly, titled the last song on the new album "Brand New Sound," but that one's more like vintage Kris: the light touch, the song that limns tantalizing silence and the tune that brings forth all our longing to be more. The Winterpills, another Northampton, Mass., export with tight harmonies, smart lyrics and gorgeously layered music, open for their

Boston buddy. Kris Delmhorst plays with the Winterpills at 8 pm Friday, March 7, at the WOW Hall. \$10 adv., \$12 door. – *Suzi Steffen*

Do You Hear the Eugeneans Sing?

If you're a certain age, you might have grown up with the phenomenon of "summer musicals." Perhaps, if you had a birthday in the summer, your parents thought they should celebrate by taking your squealing friends out to mosquito land (we're talking Midwest, here), spraying bug spray on you and then sitting you on a blanket for a KFC dinner before the pit orchestra, straining to tune in the 97 percent humidity, broke into the overture for *West Side Story*, *Oklahoma!* or *Camelot*.

Didn't happen to you? Well, in some of us, that instilled a deep love for the songs of Broadway musicals. The **Eugene Concert Choir** heard our pleas for mosquito- and humidity-less musical music. Hurray! Conductor Diane Retallack and her brave crew are in the midst of preparing songs for two shows. One's a short work focused on kid appeal (no "I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No" or "One Hand, One Heart," that thinly veiled paean to Tony

Shirley Andress



and Maria's consummation), and the other a full-on adult production. As a former Iowan, I'm pleased to say that *The Music Man* is well represented. But don't worry, y'all who have never dreamt of enjoying a musical from the "golden age" of the 1950s. There's a second golden age, made up of Cameron Mackintosh and Andrew Lloyd Webber, of Disney and of serious cash flow, and the Concert Choir isn't neglecting *Les Miserables* or the Disney repertoire (though, hey, where's *CATS* or, horrors, *Phantom?*).

Black Out

Black has inundated the indie rock world, and I don't know about you, but for me, it's getting harder to tell who's who. I mean, seriously, how many things can bands designate Black? Let's see: There are Keys that are Black; Lips that are Black; Angels, Kids, Dice, Mountains, Ghosts, Heart Processions, Rebel Motorcycle Clubs and Moth Super Rainbows, all of which are Black. Come up with a new color, people! I guess Black is the new black, but it's becoming a bit ridiculous, don't you think? Well, here's another band to add to that ever-darkening list: **The Black Swans**.

How do the Black Swans differentiate themselves from all the other Black bands? They really don't, because, like most of the Black-denominated, indie-rock acts, they sound black. By that, I don't mean black as in African-American gospel, soul, funk, R&B, blues, etc. (although I guess if you listen hard enough you can hear whispers of black influence in indie rock no matter how white it sounds). What I mean is black as in dark, ominous, haunting, subliminal, all that good stuff. The Black Swans have black in spades. The Columbus, Ohio, group pulls out the folk-rock, Americana coloring book, but they shade in the pictures of backroads, tumbleweeds and twilight with nothing but black and gray Crayons. Glooming guitars shuffle down dirt paths with crooked violins while Jerry DeCicca's sunken, eerie voice creeps along like kicked-up dust. He sounds like *Desire*-era Bob Dylan or Randy Newman if he did the soundtrack to *Deliverance* instead of *Toy Story*. Overall, the music is moody and evocative; hopefully, no one will get them confused with the other Black bands. The Black Swans play with Baitball at 9 pm, Wednesday, March 12, at Sam Bond's Garage. 21+ show. \$5. – *Jeremy Ohmes*



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