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MUSIC BY KELSEY ANNE RANKIN



PHOTO BY J. RAY

HARDCORE ROMANTICS

Novelas returns after a hiatus from the local punk scene

Local hardcore punk band Novelas knocks the patches off a typically white-bro dominated scene. The band brings a femme aesthetic, dad jeans and luscious emotional melodies to the table, and they're returning to Eugene's music world with gusto after a six-month hiatus. Get out your lipstick, grrrls.

Kris Ray, lead vocalist, says Novelas is unconventional when compared to the machismo of the scene — i.e. all black attire paired with a hyper-aggressive attitude. Ray's personality is full of high-pitched squeals and giggles, but there's a sharp mind behind her playfulness. Her lyrics delve into racism, sexism and sexual assault, and her performances consistently pack a punch.

"I'm the one who is sporadic as hell, running around and rolling on the floor," she laughs. "I accidentally head-butted someone during a set once."

The rest of Novelas is a melting pot. Guitarist Jordan Ray rocks a goofball smile along with basic dad attire. Alex Smo on drums resembles a traditional punk replete with a fondness for pit bulls and donates a chunk of his time to SevaDog Rescue, a nonprofit for rescued pups. Guitarist Wade Bulger is a T-shirt-and-jeans kind of guy, while outdoors enthusiast and bassist Alex Acuna is always climbing a mountain of some sort and dresses the part.

They're quite the sight when they're on stage.

The bandmates originally formed while sipping coffee together at Wandering Goat in the Whiteaker. Ray says the Goat offers a great space for weird, introverted musicians to come together and collaborate in a place that regularly hosts local performers. Since that fateful day a year and a half ago, Novelas has been playing together as a unit.

The group performs at house shows around Eugene or in Portland, but their most frequent venue is The Boreal, an all-ages club that offers a place for underage and sober folks to jam. Novelas has been heavily involved with The Boreal (whether they were playing shows there or not) because of its commitment to the DIY scene in town and the fact that it runs on volunteer power and public donations.

"Being in a band, we can give back to the community through music," Ray says, "but we also give back to the community by donating our time, our money and other resources that we have to keep [The Boreal] open and available."

Novelas took a six-month hiatus from performing because, Ray explains, the band agreed that life's responsibilities take precedent over the music (they all have full-time jobs and rent to pay). She says they were called back to performing by a feeling of unfinished business.

Now the band's energy is fully recharged; they're putting in some serious studio hours for their first EP, which will be released this November, and they're doing a West Coast tour in January.

You can expect a high-energy album along with their signature sound of ambient, borderline romantic-core melodies and a side of food-for-thought lyrics. ■

Welcome Novelas back to the music scene 7 pm Thursday, Sept. 29, at The Boreal; \$7, all ages.



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