



Is it a Bird? Is it a Plane? No, it's Girlyman! Over Back-flips do to Music, Simply Quite

Girlyman's debut *Remember Who I Am* was an impulse buy for me on CD Baby. One play and I was hooked. Quite simply, music to do back-flips over. Indigo Girl Amy Ray felt the same and signed them to her Daemon Records label. More good things are to come for sure, not least the release of *Little Star* on May 24. Indie Sounds caught up with one of the girlies, Ty Greenstein.

Indie Sounds: Can you give us a quick history of the band?

Ty Greenstein: Doris [Muramatsu] and I met in the second grade in West Windsor, NJ. We grew up together and started singing and playing guitar in our early teens, learning how to sing harmonies by listening to old Simon & Garfunkel records. We met Nate [Borofsky] in college, at Sarah Lawrence in Bronxville, NY.

Doris and I formed a duo called Garden Verge after college and self-released a CD [*Shadow of a Habit*]; Nate moved to Boston and released two CDs [*500 Miles* and *Never Enough Time*] as a solo artist. He moved down to NYC in 2000 and we all lived in the same apartment, so we started singing and playing together for fun. It was an exciting enough sound that we decided to drop our separate projects and form a new group.

IS: How did the band get the attention of Daemon Records, and get signed by them?

TG: Last year, we entered a contest called the Independent Music Awards. One of the judges in the folk category was Amy Ray, one of the Indigo Girls and President of Daemon. We won the contest, and someone

at the awards told us that Amy had particularly liked our song (*Viola* was the winning entry). So we sent *Remember Who I Am* to her at Daemon as a thank you - none of us even thought about the record label. But they got the CD and everyone was interested in working with us, and we were of course thrilled.

and socially responsible business decisions that we also prioritize. It's a great fit. One of the biggest perks, of course, has been touring with the Indigo Girls; their fans really get what we do and have responded with a ton of enthusiasm. Plus, artistically it just doesn't get any better or more satisfying than collaborating with Amy and Emily [Saliers].



IS: Practically, what has the association with Daemon brought?

TG: All good things. Daemon takes care of some things we just don't have the time to do anymore, like publicity and tour support. We have national distribution now through Koch Entertainment, the largest indie distributor. And Daemon makes the kind of politically

They are true inspirations.

IS: But even before you signed to Daemon, you'd sold a lot of CDs.

TG: Yes, at that point I think we had sold about 5,000 of *Remember Who I Am*. We tend to sell a lot at live shows and festivals, and with us, so much happens via word of



mouth. Someone will play the CD for a friend and that person will be excited enough to go out and buy it. It says something about our fans, also, that for the most part they don't burn our CDs - they understand and appreciate how independent musicians make a living, and support what we do by telling their friends to make a legitimate purchase.

Most of our non-show sales happened online before we had national distribution.

IS: Tell us about the new album.

TG: *Little Star* is a collection of 12 new original songs. No covers this time. We split the songwriting pretty evenly and even co-wrote a few songs with each other. The production is similar to *Remember Who I Am*, which was also co-produced by Bob Harris, but it is richer, more textured, and more sophisticated, in my opinion. And the songs are a bit more political, too.

IS: How so more political? And how do you balance making great music and speaking to political issues?

TG: Some of the songs on *Little Star* are subtly political, some are more blatant - but all our songs with political content have elements of us in them. None of us are really interested in writing "issue songs;" rather, the stories (say, in *Superior* or *Young James Dean*) are culled from some personal memory or at the least have a strong personal investment, otherwise the whole thing would ring false I think.

Specifically, there are at least three songs on the new CD that in some way speak to our observations about and objections to the current war or war in general (*Soldiers*, *Commander*, *Superior*), but all in very different ways. *Soldiers* is written from the point of view of soldiers in various U.S.-led conflicts (with the observation that these conflicts are always going on, and usually very far away), *Commander* is an examination of the inner life (as I imagine it) of George Junior, and *Superior* is narrated



Ty performing live at Eddie's Attic, 2002

from the point of view of a mother who always knew that her son had a higher calling in life, and in this town, because of economic and other factors, that means he goes to war.

As for balancing music and politics, for Girlyman there's really no conflict. We don't have an agenda, so it's all just about writing and singing from the heart. Thankfully, our hearts contain myriad feelings and opinions about the world in addition to our own personal dramas.

IS: *Remember Who I Am* is very much a collaborative effort. Is that true of the forthcoming album?

TG: Absolutely. Doris, Nate, and I arranged everything together and the studio work we did was again an intimate collaboration with Bob Harris. Bob really does contribute as much to our CDs as we do, making everything sound exactly the way we all want it to. We also worked with Julie Wolf,

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WHAT'S NEW ON CD



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Justin Tracy
Suffolk Sessions
www.justintracy.com



EJ
Mermaid Songs
www.ejrocks.com



The Savage Juliet
Another Roadside Attraction
www.thesavagejuliet.com



Real Live Girl
Dumbing Down America
www.reallivegirl.net



Rene Lopez
One Man's Year
www.renelopez.com

SCENE AND HEARD

* Harris Radio and Indie Sounds NY are putting on a great showcase at Rockwood Music Hall on Monday, May 16. Performing will be Tessa Perry, Ananda, Mahogany and Andy Germak. From 8pm, no cover. Stop by and say hello!

* In case you haven't noticed, Luna Lounge remains open on Ludlow Street, despite plans to build an apartment block at the current

location. Sadly, the reprise is temporary and the owners say it shuts for good on June 11.

* Congratulations to all the NYC acts who are nominees for this year's Outmusic Awards. Brooklyn-based Outmusic Director of Communications Ed Mannix cites the following locals as nominees: Ari Gold, God Des & Tina G, Justin Tranter, Katie Sawicki, Keyth Lawrence, Nadine Goellner, Rachael

Sage, Robert Urban, The Shirley Bailey 3, The Velvet Mafia and Will Grega. Also nominated is Christopher Dallman, who recently relocated to LA (silly boy).

Award winners will be announced on Sunday June 12 at a ceremony in Chicago. More information at www.outmusic.com.





THE LISTENING ROOM

Rockwood Music Hall

At a time when NYC is losing music venues, it's heartening when one opens, especially when it garners immediate praise from musicians and patrons alike. Rockwood Music Hall is one such destination. Indie Sounds chatted to owner, manager and sound engineer Ken Rockwood.

About Rockwood Music Hall

Location: 196 Allen Street, between Houston and Stanton.

Date opened: January 26, 2005 @ 6pm!

Capacity: 70

Nights when live music is performed: Every night at either 5pm or 7pm. In the future, it will be opening during the afternoons too.

Typical genres: Everything!

Backline: Drums: 1960 Rogers drum set (pre CBS), 1950's Gretch snare, full drum hardware; Bogner Shrive guitar amp, David Eden Time Traveler WT-390 bass amp, Welte & Son baby grand piano (1901)

Cover charge: To date, no cover. Tip bucket passed.

Contact: 212 477-4155, www.rockwoodmusichall.com

Indie Sounds: What drove you to establish Rockwood Music Hall? What kind of venue do you want it to be?

Ken Rockwood: I'm really not sure ... to have fun I think! I'd like it to bring back memories of early 1900's Vaudeville.



Ken at his desk! Photo by Jules Bowden

IS: What's your history in music?

KR: I have been playing guitar and writing songs for 28 years and I've been performing at NYC music venues for about as long. I formed Professor and Maryann [a duo with Danielle Brancaccio] in 1990.

IS: Does the fact that you are a musician yourself affect how you run the venue? Have you ever performed there?

KR: Yes, for sure. I don't care much about any other aspect of the business except the music and the experience the audience is having. I have played there twice so far.

IS: Can this intimate venue make money?

KR: I don't consider Rockwood Music Hall an "intimate" venue. It's small ... Radio City compressed into 500 square feet. A big show in a small room ... the show is what matters, what people come to see, what ultimately makes money. I don't see the relationship between size and money except in my side gig as a male prostitute.

IS: Despite the limited stage space, you have a baby grand in residence. Is that driven by a passion for the instrument?

KR: I just don't have space for it in my apartment. It's a 104-year old instrument. Recently, a piano tuner that has tuned pianos in big halls all over the world for 30 years said "It is a sad and beautiful sounding instrument." Every night, musicians thank me and curse me for having it in the room.

IS: So far, what have been the highs and lows of running the venue? How hard is it to run a music venue in NYC?

KR: There have been no low points. I have had nothing but fun from day one. NYC is a wonderful place to open a business. I have had good experiences with the city from the community board to people on the street.

IS: What's next for Professor and Maryann?

KR: Professor and Maryann are currently fine tuning new material for our fifth record entitled *Every Day Is A Good Day ... If You're Breathing*. Since I opened Rockwood Music Hall, interest in Professor and Maryann has increased greatly ... we are the most successful unsuccessful act in NYC!

IS: Apart from the acts that play at Rockwood, what other musicians do you listen to, go to see live?

KR: Dio, Hot Tuna, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Jeff Beck. The last concert I saw was Dio at the Beacon, Anthrax opened for them.

IS: And are there any other NYC venues and acts that you like to go to?

KR: I like to go to Joe's Pub and see Antony and the Johnsons.

Weblinks: www.rockwoodmusichall.com, www.professorandmaryann.com





I'M IN THE BAND

Martha's Man Aaron Whitby

Not just a band member, this month's subject, Brooklyn-based Brit Aaron Whitby, is an integral part of the funk soul sound that is Martha Redbone. Indie Sounds found out how it all came about, and what's next.

Indie Sounds: What band are you in, and what's your instrument and role?

Aaron Whitby: I work primarily with singer/soulwriter Martha Redbone. I co-write and co-produce all her material with her and play keys.

IS: What did you do in music before you joined with Martha?

AW: What wasn't I doing? I started playing piano as a kid. A horrible old upright, though I didn't know it at the time. I'd rumble the low end and think I could hear the devil, glissando the top few octaves with the sustain pedal held down and tell everyone that it sounded like the ocean. I had awful teachers in the good old English school system, including one who would even hit my hands with a ruler for incorrect fingering! (May she rot in the low end of a piano forever). They tried to make me play classical music, take my grades, and though I loved the Chopin preludes they gave me, I always leaned towards improvising and groove, even as a 10 year old. The very first music I can remember turning me on as an infant was from *The Jungle Book*. Jazz, really. By 13, after yet another miserable teacher and having discovered The Beatles - just a bit better than Boney M and Showaddywaddy, the top chart acts of the day - I abandoned the piano and started to play guitar.

At 18, I rediscovered the piano after a friend left a Casio keyboard at my place and I



Aaron in 'the office'

wrote three songs, more sophisticated than anything I'd ever come up with on guitar, in that first evening. Thank you friend. Now I really started practicing. Hard. And long. I went to music school for a year but I was already beginning to play gigs and couldn't hack the seemingly repetitive theory lessons which cut into my practice time. Over the next few years I did all sorts of gigs. A huge number of jazz pick-up gigs, occasional sessions and all sorts of duos - in London, bars need a music license for more than two musicians. I also played in Caribbean bands, most notably the zouk band Creole, African bands, especially the Super Combo Kings, where I learnt more about time than I'd ever known, and even as a sideman for Iranian pop stars who'd come to London and play huge venues to thousands of screaming ladies.

Eventually, with my jazz quartet getting to play Ronnie Scott's and the Super Combo Kings and other bands all demanding 100% of my time I had to simplify my life. I'd recently built up a little 8-track studio and writing songs and recording was giving me the most satisfaction musically so I dropped all my gigs and dedicated myself to writing. Around this time, I met Martha and writing with her was just pure joy. We had an interesting first year including meeting 'Junie' Morrison of Ohio Players and Funkadelic, who became our mentor. One day, out of the blue, 'Junie' gave us a studio! It felt like winning the lottery. We soon had a publishing deal with Warners and I started to do remixes for British RnB acts. Although

we had some cuts as Warner writers, the experience was generally miserable as the people we dealt with were aggressively unmusical. But every cloud has a silver lining and it did bring me here to NYC where for the first time I felt I could breathe.

IS: You play with others too?

AW: I did a tour and a bunch of gigs with the wonderful Mary Fahl, whom I describe as an operatic folk singer, and I write songs and do shows with neo-soul singer Gina Breedlove. I've also done a bunch of sessions but my primary interest is production.

Most recently, I completed an album with virtuoso drummer Rodney Holmes of The Steve Kimock Band and Santana. It's a mix of the Prodigy and the Mahavishnu Orchestra and currently I am working on an album with a great young pop-rock singer/songwriter, Sean Nolan. I think my skills are best suited to production as I like all kinds of music and have a lot of experience in not only playing but arranging and engineering and I enjoy helping people realize their vision.

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East Coast Songwriter Night

Kieran McGee
www.kieranmcgee.com
Buxton Street Records
"...anyone can relate to McGee's work."
- Performing Songwriter

Tom Glynn
www.tomglynn.com
Winner: John Lennon Songwriting Contest, 1998

Will Hawkins
www.willhawkins.net
"...hooky choruses sung with a husky roots-rock voice."
- Performing Songwriter

Ben Ratliff
www.benratliff.com
"...nicely lush."
- Village Voice

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LIVE BEFORE DARK

Denise Barbarita

Singer, songwriter, musician by night ... and recording engineer by day and night! That's the full life of Denise Barbarita, who is about to release her sophomore offering *Chaos and Congeniality*. The busy lady found time to talk to Indie Sounds about her musical life on both sides of the recording console.

Indie Sounds: So, what's your daytime gig?

Denise Barbarita: I'm a recording engineer at Kampo Studios in NYC. Since I was a kid, I knew I wanted to be in the studio. My interest was piqued with Pat Benetar's *Precious Time* around the time I was nine or ten. I thought she could sing three notes at a time! She was my hero! I read an interview in a magazine about the recording of the album; she answered questions about

"overdubbing" and I thought, "what's that?" At first, I was crushed that she couldn't sing three notes at a time but after the initial shock wore off, I was relieved, since I couldn't do it either, despite my hours of practice. Then I became obsessed with learning more about what the studio is and how things were done.

IS: How did the job come about?

DB: I graduated from Berklee College of Music with a degree in Music Production and Engineering in 1993 and then moved to NYC. From there, I did what every other engineer has done before me ... began at the bottom of the barrel as an intern and then moved up to become an assistant engineer, and for the last four years or so, I've been in the big chair.

IS: Your job complements your music?

DB: Well, it takes a long time, long hours, no social life, no sleep, no money, in fact that's why it took so long for me to put out my first album! I couldn't even be sure the day I asked off from work to do a gig would be honored. I actually had to cancel some gigs at the last minute a few times. There was a good bit of time where I had to put the performance/writer aspect of myself away in the closet in order to follow the studio path. But looking back, I'm so thankful I went through all that. It makes me appreciate the moments I have now. I'm living my dreams! Being able to work with artists who inspire me. Being able to record/produce my own albums. I'm very lucky to be in a position where I can pick and choose who I work with. Sometimes people make comments like, "It must be nice to have a professional studio at your disposal," and I say, yes it is. But they don't see the many years of struggle it took to get to

this point. What I wouldn't be able to do is go into the studio and just be "the artist." I'd probably be an engineer's worst nightmare!

IS: Can you name some of the people you have worked with at the studio?

DB: Well, I've had involvement with more than 30 records, everyone from Halley Devestern, Jennifer Edwards and Kristi Martel to Herbie Hancock, Dizzy Gillespie and the Roots.

IS: So, what's next for you musically?

DB: Record #2, *Chaos and Congeniality* is almost finished. I would say it'll be "retail-ready" by the first week of June. I'm so proud of this album, yet I'm scared of it too. It's very different than my last album, *Beauty Lied*, both lyrically, and compositionally. I think, looking back, *Beauty Lied* was an exercise in proving to myself that I could produce and record my own album. I played it safe in some aspects. My band was also still in it's infancy. Many of the songs on the new album were recorded live, it was more of a band effort, than a "what does Denise want" effort and many of the new songs are emotionally draining on me. It's been a bit of a tumultuous ride on a personal level these past couple of years. The lyrics reflect that. I guess you could say the new record is *Beauty Lied* with the safety switch off!

IS: And what about playing out?

DB: I've been doing some shows with Indie Music For Life. It's an organization I'm really proud to be a part of, and Vicki Blankenship, the founder, is a huge inspiration to me! The proceeds benefit cancer research.

I love being part of events that are "bigger than me" if you know what I mean? In my mind, music is about communication, about touching souls. I want to know where the voices of my generation are? Where is my Bob Dylan? Where is my Arlo Guthrie? I've noticed a growing trend toward artists being



Denise Barbarita After Dark

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Girlyman ...

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who added depth with her keyboards and accordion, and Joe Dye, who added that amazing pedal steel.

IS: On stage, there is a lot of humor in Girlyman performances. Is that something you try to include as a set piece or does it just come naturally?

TG: It comes naturally. We're all best friends, and we're pretty much the same offstage as we are on - just always cracking each other up. If we actually tried to be funny, it would probably fall flat.

IS: What's the story behind the reverse-lyrics version of Wild Thing?

TG: That's a concert secret! You have to come to a live show to find out. I will say there was some intoxication involved, and something with those signs in the Holland Tunnel that say "LANE IN STAY."

IS: Is Brooklyn a home or a base?

TG: It's both. We're there less than half the year, but when we are home, we really do it up. Lots of home-cooked meals, get-togethers with friends, rehearsals in our living room. We're a family and we all do take care of each other and see our lives and our creative work as cooperative endeavors.

IS: Apart from the new album, what's next?

TG: Another tour with the Indigo Girls in July, this time on the West coast. And we'll be appearing on the Indigo's *Rarities* alum coming out this summer.

Girlyman play Joe's Pub on May 27.

Weblinks: www.girlyman.com,
www.daemonrecords.com



Martha's Man Aaron ...

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IS: What's next for you and Martha?

AW: We completed Martha's new album *Skintalk* at the end of last year. We're very proud of it and it's been going really well so far, which is very gratifying. We just got back from playing the amazing New Orleans Jazz Festival, a total blast. This month, we're doing a 'stripped-down funk' series at The Living Room. Every Wednesday in May at 9pm, with different versions of our 'drum n bass-less' show. With guitarist Mike Campbell, Teddy Kumpel on his baritone guitar, one with background singers, maybe one with percussion. We're also opening for Bonnie Raitt in Minneapolis this month at a gala to launch Native American leader Clyde H. Bellecourt's Scholarship Fund. Then, on June 10, we're taking our 10-piece band into Joe's Pub. Along with The Living Room, Joe's Pub is our NYC home, we always have great fun there. Then there's Celebrate Brooklyn in Prospect Park on July 1 and it now looks like we're off to South Africa in July for the Durban Music festival!

IS: How do you like the NYC music scene?

AW: I love the NYC scene. It's why I'm here. Compared to London, it's far less cliquey and far more vertical. By vertical I mean that 'superstar' musicians play local gigs and are genuinely involved in the local scene unlike in London.

I guess my biggest gripe would be some of the poor sound systems at some of the venues. When the bar is making money and the musicians aren't, it's particularly galling that they won't even help us present our music at it's best. But basically I think the scene is great, and I've met many good friends and heard a lot of inspiring music.

Weblink: www.martharedbone.com



Denise Barbarita ...

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very self absorbed and unwilling to share unless it benefits them in some way. I understand that, NYC is a tough place to make a living and the music industry in general is a very tough field these days ... more corporate-driven conformity than originality, but I feel we, as artists, have a responsibility to use our talents for a greater good, not just striving towards stroking our own egos. That's starting to get lost, I think.

That's why I'm also working towards putting together a tour with two other artists from NYC to raise political awareness. We're planning on calling it "Music Changes everything." The idea is a "town-hall" style meeting with music and public servants coming to talk about their roles in government. I hope it will inspire the audience to get involved in their communities.

I'm also booking a spring tour. A few of the dates will benefit Indie Music for Life, a few will be plain ol' shows. It's going to be a busy year, I think, but I'm looking forward to it.

Weblink: www.myshytune.com



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BACKLINE

Five Vital Questions For ...
Liz Clark

1. Who should be the next president?

OPRAH 2008! OPRAH 2008! OPRAH 2008!!!

2. What is your favorite term of abuse?

Douche-bag. Or sometimes D-bag. It makes them so Uncool!

3. Who would you like to be stranded on a desert island with?

Someone I can procreate with, preferably like Brad Pitt in Fight Club. I'd like some good conversation, but when it really comes down to it, I might have to replenish the island's population.

4 What is man's greatest invention?

The vibrator! (Ok, just kidding, really). Jeans, I'm gonna say. Tight ones. Everyone loves jeans.

5. What was the first album you ever bought?

Last Splash by The Breeders. Remember them? I must've been in third grade.



More on Liz @ www.lizclarkmusic.com.

Questions by Tessa Perry,
www.tessaperry.com.



Open Mic Corner

Liberty Heights Tap Room: Every Thursday. Signup at 8pm. A great venue in Brooklyn's Red Hook district. A bar with the best home-brewed beer and fantastic food! The Liberty is at 34 Van Dyke Street (corner of Dwight Street). Take the B77 bus right to the door and have a couple of pints!

Rockwood Music Hall: Is the new home for Outmusic's Outloud open mic. Previously at the C-Note, the night takes place on the first Monday of every month. Signup at 7pm. One song each. Full backline available. Entrance is \$3 for Outmusic members, \$5 for others. The Rockwood is at 196 Allen Street (between Houston and Stanton).

Pete's Candy Store: Holds an open mic every Sunday. Signup at 5pm. Pete's is at 709 Lorimer Street, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

The Baggot Inn: Hosts its open mic every Monday, from 7pm. It's located in the Village at 82 West 3rd Street (between Thompson and Sullivan).

WHERE TO FIND INDIE SOUNDS NY

Acme Underground
www.acmeunderground.com

Kenny's Castaways
www.kennyscastaways.net

Pete's Candy Store
www.petescandystore.com

The C-Note
www.thecnote.com

Arlene's Grocery
www.arlene-grocery.com

Laila Lounge
www.lailalounge.com

Rockwood Music Hall
www.rockwoodmusichall.com

The Living Room
www.livingroomny.com

Caffe Vivaldi
www.caffevivaldi.com

Micky's Blue Room
www.mickysblueroom.com

Southpaw
www.spsounds.com

The Sidewalk Cafe
www.antifolk.net

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www.galapagosartspace.com

Parkside Lounge
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The Bitter End
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