

Mp3 Dirty Martini - Rock: Acoustic



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Four of the Northwest's most acclaimed female musicians come together in one band. 12 MP3 Songs

ROCK: Acoustic, POP: Folky Pop Details: On Valentine's Day, 2003, four of the Northwest's most acclaimed female musicians performed together for the first time -- almost by accident -- at a club in Portland, Oregon. The irony that four talented, single women were without dates on the most romantic day of the year was not lost on them, and after a few drinks and some post-show commiseration, it began to look like fate. They decided that perhaps four against the world would be more fun than single-handedly attempting the task, and they all felt strangely up to it. So after another round of backstage dirty martinis, a group was born. Lea Krueger, McKinley, Lara Michell, and Stephanie Schneiderman have all earned individual success over the years with their own, critically-acclaimed CD releases, but the alchemy they've created together as Dirty Martini has helped them build a large and loyal audience in the Northwest; an audience that has embraced the quartet's eclectic mix of intimate lyrics, complex harmonies, serious songwriting skills and musical abilities. All four members come from diverse backgrounds. Lea Krueger, a gem of the Northwest music scene, amazes audiences with her mastery of song, musical expertise and unmistakable voice - a unique blend of tenderness with intensity, playful and innocent, yet at times delivered with a fury and passion that (as one journalist wrote) "could easily dismantle your roof." Lea's most recent CD release is entitled 'Strange Hallelujah.' McKinley has released two solo albums, Big Top Shop Talk in 1997 on original Santana drummer Michael Shrieve's Gold Circle imprint, which led to touring with label mate David Crosby, and Goner last year, both of which were ecstatically reviewed both locally and nationally. Lara Michell, guitarist from Portland's Carmina Piranha, has also released two solo records, Tide Pool in 1997 and Somniloquy in 2001, an album The Oregonian described as "gorgeous dreamscape" chamber pop. And Stephanie Schneiderman, who beat

out hundreds of other aspiring artists for a slot on the 1999 Lilith Fair tour, has released two solo albums, 'Unbelievably Unbroken' in 2001 and her latest release 'Touch Down.' But it was that fateful night in February that led to where they are now. "My band was offered a gig on a Valentine's night, (but) we couldn't do it, so I called Lara, and we kind of figured out who we'd want," Stephanie explains. "It sort of accidentally fell into place that it was going to be the four of us on this particular show, so we started rehearsing. And since it was Valentine's Day we decided to do some covers, some poppy love songs, some downtrodden, unhappy breakup songs." "The joke was none of us really had happy love songs and we figured we had to please the people in the crowd on Valentine's Day, so we had to cover songs to provide some sort of romance," Lara adds. There was no actual foresight that one evening would turn into an ongoing project but there was the added element that all four were fans of each other's music. And that simple nuance has become the glue that holds them all together - mutual respect. It is the most important pointer to their future together, not the fact that Dirty Martini is an all female group. That potency has captured the hearts of music fans all over the Northwest; audiences are enchanted not only by their individual talents, but also by the ease in which four diverse and eclectic styles meld into a cohesive whole. This past June, they chose the intimate Red Room at Portland's Mississippi Studios to record what will become the first Dirty Martini album, with the basic tracks recorded live in front of a small gathering of fans. Although it was recorded as a live set to capture the spirit of a Dirty Martini show, the upcoming album -- set for release, appropriately, on Valentine's Day 2005 -- is not to be considered a "live" record. The girls have been working on enhancing the basic tracks from that evening's performance, adding overdubs, harmonies and percussion.

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