

Mp3 The Basics - Cosmic Neighborhood



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Modern folk/rock. "This is Folk Music, emphasis included, and even though the messages were sometimes bleak, sometimes painful, the true root of this music was never in question." 12 MP3 Songs

ROCK: Folk Rock, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: West-Coast Duo Makes Their East-Coast Debut in Chapel Hill by Alan R. Hall If you know Chapel Hill, NC, then you know Franklin Street; it literally runs from one end of town to the other. And if you know Franklin Street, you know the Villa Teo, which is a treat for the eye; an Italian villa, set right off the road, that was once a restaurant, and now is a renowned source for antiques. And lately, it is pretty well accepted that if you know the Villa Teo, then you know the Caffè Triade, a coffeehouse that has managed to draw very nearly everyone in town to it at least once, if only to see its location. It's pretty staggering, even by Chapel Hill's standards. Tucked into a grove of trees just a stone's throw from the Villa, it sports a lovely green lawn, a stone outdoor seating area, a rear, tree-covered patio, and just about the sheerest drop of hill from that patio in the entirety of Chapel Hill, which is, of course, known for its hills. Oh, and don't forget; there's the outdoor stage just out front, where, from late spring to late fall, the Caffè presents some of the very best in Triangle (and not-so-Triangle) live music. Wednesday night is songwriter night, the night of the troubadour; and I can tell you personally there is no shortage of those who fit that description in the Triangle. Both Fridays and Saturdays there is a wide range to choose from; there is Roots music, Jazz, Folk, Rock, and even an upcoming show whose chosen style of music is "ethereal pop." The one thing that links every one of these groups together is that they are fine, knowledgeable, and entertaining musicians. This common factor is what keeps Caffè Triade packed on weekend nights. Just as the sun starts going down, the music starts going up. And from jazz to roots to "this is my thing," you can count on one thing: it is music that will be entertaining. This past Friday was no exception. A duo who called themselves "The Basics," two guitars and two voices, was in fact

making their east coast debut Friday. The couple, who met in college at Stanford and married shortly thereafter, have lived in the Triangle only a year or two; they spent the preceding 15 years on the West Coast, touring with a back-up trio 108 shows a year and building up a collection of 5 indy CD's. It shows. Even though the two were sans trio and (they admitted afterward) a trifle nervous, they gave a show that had the house right with them, presenting deceptively simple tunes that had poetic, sophisticated lyrics, some splendid and soaring harmonies, and an engaging style that made you want to listen. There was no doubt as to their genre; this is Folk Music, emphasis included, and even though the messages were sometimes bleak, sometimes painful, the true root of this music was never in question. Both of the pair, Kelly and Wade, play guitar and sing, and their voices mingle in ways that can send chills up your spine. Kelly has a soaring soprano that can fly over Wade's melodic line in such a way that they put down a style that is unconditionally their own. And the vocal mixture doesn't stop there. Sometimes Kelly is the low voice while Wade presents a pretty solid falsetto that puts him right up there; it's as if the two trade places. It's more than just ear-catching; it's almost spooky. The set was a combination of music that is original and borrowed; for example, Kelly sang a song written by Shawn Colvin titled "Diamond in the Rough" that was a fireball. But there was also music like "1942," a story song about a man and wife who fell in love during the days of World War II and their good, and not-so-good years together. Wade's lyrics made this a rich and powerful work. And there was Kelly's "find out what's true" instruction, in a song called "Angel's Long Tooth," which not only gave true life to her soaring vocals, but also exhibited a smoothness of voice that was a perfect complement to Wade's backing falsetto crooning. And then there is the practice used by the two that I can only describe as "ghost lyrics," which works amazingly well -- a line repeated softly by one singer just after the other, like an echo. The poetry -- this stuff is too good to be called simply "lyrics" -- shows itself in nearly every song. One song they wrote for a film was "Nevada Sky." "Why must a Nevada sky be so blue? If a cloud can't survive then how can I? Why should I choose the desert first When all it does is make me thirst? Or another one of Kelly's solos, "Almost Back to Happy:" "Skeleton girl, come see the world..." or "Half past manic, a quarter to joy." This is music that demands you listen to it. Sure there is angst; there is a lot of pain to be found in these songs; but there is also a lot of joy, and not a little faith. It's all there, from the song Kelly wrote about turning thirty, "The Mystery of Empty" -- "it's the laughter I forget, the losses I remember" -- to the very joyful song that was only the third into the first set, "Rain." It was later requested by a friend, who arrived late, so the duo

played it again; no one minded. The combination of experience, musical acumen, 15 years of playing together and some just plain genuine talent, makes this duo one that you will want to hear. This was ably shown in one of the last tunes of the night, "When I Close My Eyes." Beginning with an a capella intro, and developing into a full-voiced duo with dual guitars, this song was big -- almost too big for only a pair of voices, and a show-stopper if ever there was one. This music is energy-filled, and it jumps off the stage and grabs you by the collar, and says, "Listen!" And you will. You'll want to. Copyright Alan R. Hall About the author: Living in the heart of North Carolina, where theater thrives. Writing is my need, music is my love, but theater is my passion. I hope to inspire everyone to become more involved in theater, in dance, in music - in ALL the Arts.

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