

Mp3 Boca Chica - Folk: Folk Pop



Boca Chica

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Boca Chica combines the honesty of backporch folk with the the best of the indie scene-- gentle synth washes blend spectacularly with upright bass, fiddle and plunky banjo playing to create highly evocative, innovative and plain good music. 7 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, COUNTRY: Country Folk Details: "Undertow" is January 27th's featured track on NPR's All Songs Considered open mic! Listen to it and check out our smiling faces at npr.org/openmic. "Welcome to Boca Chica's underwater dancehall. Built beneath the waves and seafoam, far from the safety of any shoreline, Hallie Pritts and Susanna Meyer, with the aid of Greg Dutton and Megan Williams, have created a sort of siren's honkytonk. Strongmen, jugglers, and clowns. Freaks, punks, and cowgirls. A deepsexed sideshow, a carnival of souls. Boca Chica's sweet serenade to all of us, the loving and the loved, each one of us drowned in the same deep waters, is at once elegiac and hopeful, knowing and naive. It's the sound that leads us down into the pool, and it's the sound we make as we surrender to the Love we all hope for and the Love we all fear." - Kristofer Collins, owner of Desolation Row CDs, Pittsburgh, PA Boca Chica has been described as indie folk, retro-country, and alt-alt country. Marked by dripping sweet vocal harmonies, a cool lead voice, and plunky banjo playing, Boca Chica takes elements of backporch folk songs, bluegrass and progressive indie folk and blends them up into something unique, honest, provocative, and surprising with mini-KORG synth washes blending spectacularly with upright bass and fiddle. Begun in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the summer of 2004 by childhood friends Hallie Pritts and Susanna Meyer, Boca Chica gained the guitar, banjo, and keyboard abilities of Greg Dutton (LoHio) in December of that year. Filling out Pritts spacious songwriting style and Meyer's solid thumping bass parts, Dutton adds his pop sensibilities to the stark old country ballad style developed by Pritts and Meyer. Brand new addition Megan Williams (formerly Last Night on Earth, Emily Rodgers and her Majesty's Stars) makes a fiddle appearance on the debut EP and

will be regularly adding her stunning violin to the mix. The Pittsburgh City Paper has described the Boca Chica sound as a "Steinbeckian blend of Appalachian, alt-country and folk rock" and the band was well-received at the World Caf in Philadelphia where they opened for folk legend Laura Love. In their short career, Boca Chica has had the opportunity to share the stage with Jolie Holland (ANTI-) and long time folk stars, Sue Garner and Angel Dean. Their debut self-titled EP is a collection of 7 original songs and is a testament to Boca Chica's beginnings as a young but clear voice in the Pittsburgh music scene and beyond.

Boca Chica Land O' Goshen Writer: MANNY THEINER "Desolation Row" is no longer just a song by Bob Dylan, or a record store ensconced among the stacks of Oakland's Caliban bookshop. Now, the phrase also qualifies as a catchall for an unassuming but vibrantly creative cadre of melancholic roots-folk-rock-pop musicians quietly brewing in the East End. Both Kevin Finn, with his solo efforts and the band Last Night on Earth, and Emily Rodgers, with the group Her Majesty's Stars, have made their presence felt here. Now, it's the turn of Boca Chica, led by songstress Hallie Pritts with her best friend since the fifth grade, Susanna Meyer, backing her up on upright bass. Growing up in the small Westmoreland County town of Scottdale on her mom's musical diet of Neil Young and Dylan and CSNY, Pritts landed back in the Pittsburgh area at the leading edge of a small flock of graduates of Goshen College, a Mennonite school in northern Indiana. With a radio station pumping out Americana to the students, and members of the school's radio station receiving complimentary copies of No Depression magazine, it's not surprising that some -- like Rodgers, Pritts and Meyer -- decided to turn their hands to similar songwriting. Yet their musical epiphany actually occurred as a result of a fortuitous spring-break experience. Rather than risking sunburn in Cancun, the three women looked for a venue where they could bask in the glory of one of their favorite artists -- Gillian Welch. "It ended up being in North Carolina," recalls Pritts. "We drove all the way there, and it turned out to be a bluegrass festival where we stayed for four days. And that's where I started getting into the more traditional side of the music." The seed of her collaborative effort with Meyer -- who had spent time in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, writing for a magazine about organic farms -- was planted, and all they needed was a name. "When Susanna returned, she was throwing all these Spanish words around, and she said 'boca chica' one day. It means 'small mouth,' but I just liked the rhythm of it, so it stuck." Debuting Boca Chica as a duo (it has since expanded, with the addition of guitar, banjo and gentle, Wilco-esque synth washes from Greg Dutton), the group has since been well received along with Finn, Rodgers, and Dutton's other group,

Lohio, at the mecca of mature songcraft -- the World Caf venue in Philadelphia. With their soon-to-be-released self-titled CD (recorded live to eight-track in Finn's house), it remains to be seen whether Pittsburgh's own proponent of city-slicker folk-pop, WYEP, will jump on the Boca Chica bandwagon. According to Pritts, her band's Steinbeckian blend of Appalachian, alt-country and folk rock has appealed to the graying Calliope folkies as well as a smattering of indie-rock whelps who cut their teeth in the late '90s on Palace, Freakwater and Edith Frost. But like any budding artist searching for her muse, she just wishes there were more of them. "When we go other places, it seems that there are a lot of people in their 20s and 30s, and even younger than that, who are into that kind of music," she says, without much hint of the twang that characterizes her vocal style. "But around here, it doesn't look like it's caught on that way yet." "On the East Coast, that music mainly targets the boomer crowd, like with Triple-A radio stations," adds Dutton, who was raised on a farm outside of Flushing, Ohio. "But then, if you go into the Midwest, where people grew up on more rural music, you find a younger audience more receptive to 'neo-folk' and that kind of stuff. Coming from [that area], that's definitely the experience I've had."

pghcitypaper Music Preview: Boca Chica moves around the Americana Landscape Thursday, August 18, 2005 By John Hayes, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Think of all those vinyl albums by '70s folk-rockers in your parents' record collection. Think songwriter Gillian Welch without guitar god David Rawlings. Think story songs and simple musical Americana. Lawrenceville's Hallie Pritts thinks a lot about those things. Her music isn't specifically any of the above, but it borrows liberally from all of it. While it might be tempting to call it "bluegrass," in the post-"O Brother" world the plunk of a five-string doesn't necessarily grow 'grass and the pluck of a six-string isn't a signature sign of country. Pritts wanders throughout the Americana landscape without sinking roots too deeply. Surrounded by a capable band she calls Boca Chica (Pritts on guitar and lead vocals, Susanna Meyer on upright bass, Greg Dutton on banjo and keyboards), Pritts celebrates the independent release of her first CD, named for the band, Saturday at Quiet Storm. "A lot of my influences come from '70s folk-rock people: Neil Young, Joni Mitchell," she says. "My mom had a lot of those records around the house and, well, I took 'em. Then Susanna and I started going to bluegrass festivals ... because Gillian Welch was there." Instead of stealing too literally from her influences, Pritts borrows enough to build sparse musical lattices on which she weaves her winding stories. "People have told me that a lot of songs might be compared to poems," she says. "Mine are more like short stories." In her musical novella "Boating Backwards," Pritts conjures a vibrant tale of

circus lovers, complete with three rings worth of narrative. "I like telling stories with lots of visual imagery," she says. Co-produced by Pittsburgh singer-songwriter Kevin Finn, and including a little fiddle by Megan Williams, the CD is as literary as it is musical. "John Steinbeck is as much an influence as Welch and Young," she says. "I sort of struggle with what to call it. Alt-country doesn't quite really hit the nail on the head. I think maybe indie-folk." post-gazette.com

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