Mp3 Red And Black - Pop: Folky Pop



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When they were still a coffee house band in Seattle, and their music was almost exclusively acoustic pop. Winners of the prestigious Honorable Mention Certificate in the 11th Annual Billboard Song Contest for "That's The Way Love Goes". 14 MP3 Songs POP: Folky Pop, FOLK: Folk Pop Details: Back in the summer of 1993, Nico Valenzuela answered an ad in the Seattle free music rag called The Rocket. Nico had just come off of a year of avoiding music, after the previous year when the rock band he was in broke up and left him very discouraged. It seemed like he'd never connect with any focused, talented and responsible musicians. He had even sold his keyboard and some other equipment. The ad was placed by two guitarists looking for a singer for a self-styled recording project. Nico decided to check it out. When he showed up for his audition, he brought a few tapes of other projects. He was only the second singer they interviewed, but William H. (Bill) D'luhosh and Brandon Arnold felt he was just what they were looking for. The three of them worked together under the name of Jolly Roger for four months, until personal difficulties arose between Nico and Brandon. Nico finished the six-song demo he agreed to record, and when he had his own copy of it, he walked. Bill called up a few weeks later and asked Nico if he'd be interested in working just with him. Nico said of course, as Bill was always very easy to get along with and had tons of great musical ideas. As a matter of fact, one of the songs from that six song demo mentioned earlier was re-recorded for the RED and BLACK CD. It was the only song of the six on the demo that was Bill's music only. The song was "Except Your Love." Nico didn't hear from Bill again until the last week in December 1993 when Bill called to tell him he had spoken to Brandon and told him he wanted to work with Nico on the side. Brandon then informed Bill it was "him or me," to which Bill promptly stated, "I guess it's him then" and hung up. Even though Bill and Brandon had worked together on and off for five years (ever since they both attended the Seattle Art Institute where Bill graduated with a music production

degree), they haven't spoken since. As fate would have it, Nico and Bill's first songwriting session just happened to fall on January 1st, 1994 (a Saturday). They made a goal for themselves the first year of writing fifty-two songs (a song per week), and they kept that goal. About halfway through their first year, they had the opportunity to play on a live radio show in Olympia and took it (one of Bill's good friends had a sister who DJ'd for the station). It was a lot of fun and a great experience, and it also ended up changing the way they were planning their songwriting careers. Originally Bill and Nico both had discouraging experiences with playing live; not because of the actual performing (which was fun), but because it also required playing with other musicians, most of whom were flaky and egotistical. For this reason, they had decided when they first got together they would just write songs and sell them. It was this frame of mind that was challenged the day they played the radio show. The same evening they were scheduled to play, another singer/songwriter was going on after them. Her name was Fran Marranca. She showed up early and was surprised when she found out the music she heard coming over the speakers was not an established band's CD, but a live performance by two unknowns! She waited until they were done and before she went on she asked them if they would like to play a gig at Borders Books and Music in Tacoma for \$100.00. Bill and Nico of course said yes - who wouldn't? As it turned out, Fran was the booking agent for all the acts that played that bookstore coffeeshop on Friday nights. They played their next four live gigs at Borders in Tacoma. It went better than they ever dreamed it would, so they started playing other live venues as well. In 1995 they played guite a few shows around the Puget Sound area and then by February of 1996 they had to end their live performances indefinitely due to all the time their CD was demanding from them. They didn't play their next live show until November 22nd, 1996. Staying away didn't seem to hurt them at all because many that were there that night said it was the best show they had ever seen RED and BLACK do! Back in the spring of 1995 they also played at the Village Espresso and Deli for the first time. It was on May 20th, and it turned out to be the beginning of a long and very special friendship between the owners and RED and BLACK. Rich Arsenault and his wife Marolyn not only made Bill and Nico feel very at home, but they also allowed them to play as much as they wanted to, whenever they wanted! Nico also loves it there because they serve the best turkey submarine sandwiches in town, not to mention keeping the beverage refrigerator stocked with Peach Tea Snapple. It was during a private party RED and BLACK were playing back in July of 1995 when they first met the drummer who would eventually help them lay down the first rhythm tracks on their CD. His name

was Greg Berg. He hadn't played in four years, but he was very enthusiastic and Bill and Nico liked his attitude. In October 1995 Bill and Nico started shopping for a studio to record in. They looked around quite a bit but nothing was really standing out to them. Then Nico found a little ad in the Rocket's studio ad section, for a place called "World Rhythms Recording Studio." Nico scheduled a visit. When Bill and Nico saw what the owner/operator had done to his relatively small studio, they were extremely impressed. The hourly rate was so low they asked him why that was. Mehrdad Azadi (the owner) replied that he charged very little for two reasons. First, he wanted to give musicians on a budget an equal chance to be heard, and secondly, the low price created such a demand he could choose his clients, as opposed to accepting whomever called or knocked on his door. Mehrdad had specific things in mind for his studio and did not want to work with any negative people or negative music. RED and BLACK became one of his favorite projects. The working relationship between Bill, Nico and Mehrdad turned into a very focused and productive atmosphere. They were motivated to work hard on this project because they all saw something special in it. Even the ten hired musicians brought in to play the other instruments (RED and BLACK is technically a duo) felt a piece of the magic. During the course of recording, Mehrdad changed the name of his studio to "World Rhythms Production and Services" and added lots of new equipment, like 8 more tracks (making it a digital 24 track studio), some excellent new microphones, and last but not least, a whole new facility in Redmond (the studio was originally in Lake Forest Park). The new studio is beautiful and spacious, with comfortable control room and all the creature comforts musicians love. The recording took place between November 1995 and November 1996. They also mixed it in Mehrdad's studio, but they drove the DAT masters down to Portland Oregon to remaster the whole CD at a place called the Radar Station. They even had to drive back down again to make sure everything came out right! They received the CD's on February 11th, 1997. They knocked on a few doors, sold a few CDs; then something very strange happened in September 1997... and no one ever heard from RED and BLACK again, until 2004.

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