

seven

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APRIL 8 - APRIL 15

ALL YOUR COASTAL ENTERTAINMENT

The Joy of Uke with Miss Amber and Stuke

ON- AND OFFSTAGE PARTNERSHIP, THE DELIGHTFUL MISS AMBER AND THE DAPPER STUKULELE, LAUNCH THEIR NEW ALBUM ON FRIDAY AT MULLUMBIMBY'S POINCIANA CAFE. THE TWO INDUSTRIOUS UKE-LOVERS TALKED TO SEVEN ABOUT MAKING IT BIG WITH A LITTLE INSTRUMENT.

Tell me, how is making music different on little instruments? I note that you use the uke and the kazoo... and even little Rosie? Does it make you rethink how you will present a song? The ukulele is an enabler, Mandy. It enables me to play sweet jazzy chords with one finger, so the songs that I wrote 20 years ago on guitar to appear like a flash hi-brow jazzier that were always too difficult to pull off are now relatively easy. Kazoo is the poor man's brass section... one step up from mouth trumpet, which we also use. Rosie wrote most of the lyrics and melody for the song in question and there's no way Miss Amber was allowed to steal it from her... two versions appear on the album.

You are originally a drummer. What is it about the uke that has called you over to the dark side... or is it the light side? Well, Ms Nolan, I needed something more. Being a drummer can fairly suck most of the time... You're first to the gig and last to leave, you have the heaviest and most gear to lug... and no-one really notices you up the back holding it all together with the bass player... sure, I had my share of groupies but... before I picked up the uke I'd never sing. It's only because I needed to lead songs for the kids I taught at school that I even tried. An enabler the ukulele is.

Tell me one of the key strengths that you and Amber have as a husband/wife duo? The blend of our combined personality disorders creates a tempestuous and dramatic union. Onstage we put that aside and get on with job of delivering the tunes. I think people relate to the effort it takes to appear unified, and feel disarmed and comfortable watching us perform.

What are the drawbacks to being a working musical couple? Do you take criticism well from each other? I take criticism from no-one... no-one. I'll dish it out, though.

Tell me about the trip to Melbourne. How was the response? Melbourne was great! Amber tried on every dress she could find in Dangerfield. The half-hour show went well; we even had a few people in tears... The Melbourne Ukulele Festival (MUF) gave us a deadline to work towards. We wanted to have calling card to leave behind as we still have an amateur standing in the greater uke community at large. We sold one CD and gave away many... a bit like an expensive business card.

Why do you think there has been such a massive response to the ukulele as a group instrument - has it created a new musical community that wasn't there before? Oh yes. It is an easy instrument to play, on some levels, and because of its non-threatening size and cost it has attracted people who always wanted to learn how to play music. It's everywhere at the moment, in the classrooms and on the world stages, and even though there's always going to be haters, the instrument is being treated with a lot more respect and is becoming more commonplace and accepted.

Tell me about the lovely song Paris Unicorn - it's such a lovely child's fantasy but still appeals to the adult. The song in question came about because I was playing the uke while making sure Rosie didn't slip in Grandmum's tub. I played a little progression and Rosie came out with the line



'I Went to Paris On A Unicorn'. Cuteness! the dream was born... we are hoping someone will use the song in a movie or an ad to finance her gap-year trip to Paris. On another level, it could also be a metaphor for the acceptance of gay marriage.

This album has a definite Parisian feel - was that the plan? That song *Paris Unicorn* has been the centre of our universe ever since it was born so it must have transformed us on a cellular level. I do sometimes buy coffee from La Table.

How did the CD come to be? Where did you record? Did Pozible help? Originally we began a Pozible campaign to produce an EP of five songs to take to Melbourne. When we reached our target of \$3,000 five days early, I figured why go to all that trouble for just five songs. We discovered we had enough songs and Rod Coe on double bass and I laid down 12 bed tracks on the first day so we went for the album. We ended up blowing the budget, though it was worth it. We recorded in Heaven Studios down near Yamba with Paul Agar... he was the perfect man for the job... super speedy; he pulls beautiful, warm and natural acoustic sounds and has a lovely studio-side manner. He also plays lap steel, which appears on the second-last track. There were a lot of loud cicadas. If you listen with headphones you can hear them on the Cyndi Lauper cover *Time After Time*. We are both very proud of the album and everyone who has heard it has been very complimentary. It is a nice slice of easy listening that bears many repeat listens... even if we do say so ourselves.

So what should we expect at the launch? We are lucky to have many generous musical friends who we will be calling on to present a tune or two to fill a half-hour spot. We will go on at about 6.15 and play the album in sequence as faithfully as we can muster with the very same musicians who appeared on the album. It's a short album so should be about a 45-minute set. The aim is to thank as many people all at once in a brief ceremony to send our album into the world. Climb the rainbow little album... right up to sky!

5.30pm Friday 11 April at the Poinciana Café Mullumbimby.



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SATURDAY APRIL 12
BALL PARK MUSIC,
PAPA VS PRETTY,
HOLY HOLY, CHRIS BRADLEY

coming soon

- 17 APRIL GOONS OF DOOM
- 18 APRIL THE SWAMPS
- 19 APRIL TOMB STONED - AN ELECTRONIC EASTER
- 25 APRIL WANDERING EYES
- 26 APRIL SALMONELLA DUB SOUNDSYSTEM
- 27 APRIL GLORYHAMMER
- 10 MAY HITS AND PITS

- Wed 9 SCOTT DAY-VEE
- Thu 10 MARSHALL O'KELL,
BYRON BAY BOARDRIDERS
RAFFLES 6.30PM
- Fri 11 GREENTHIEF, THE BLACK
LULLABY, HAMMERS, TAYA
MILLS
- Sun 13 KYLE LIONHART
- Mon 14 LOREN
- Tue 15 JOSH HAMILTON

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