3RFS eTALK July 2006 - Page 1 of 1

Doc_Babad's Intro

A few years ago, Franck Cuta lent me some sampler albums he'd collected at a Folk-Life festival. Many of the artists represented were local (e.g., Northwest) and there were even folks I'd heard before and whose albums I owned. Much to my delight there were also samplers with artists from both the Southwest and the East coast. So I was doing my usual late-afternoon and evening thing — testing and then writing software reviews or pouring through my cryptic notes and marginalia to create computer book reviews. This is a prime time for me to listen to albums I've acquired or borrowed, letting them spin in the background. I wasn't, as usual, paying front and center attention to the music. But a group of female voices broke though my otherwise focused attention to my writing. I played back the cut of interest, twice, read the liner notes and got on line and bought both albums by these artists — <code>Sweet Mystery of Life</code> and <code>Storming the Castle</code>. Full Fontal Folk had hooked me. I put together parts of this review, after an Internet search, in December of 2004, but never got around to finishing it. Meanwhile I'd played the alums over several times, a big deal when you're a collector of music. So it was time to share.

Much of this review was taken from the information posted at the CD Baby site, with bits and pieces pulled from other reviews posted on the internet – my pastiche of words others have written better than I could.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

Full Frontal Folk - http://www.fullfrontalfolk.com/

Albums

Sweet Mystery of Life Storming the Castle

Wendy Fuhr (Fatale) - Vocals, Violin and Guitar; Courtney Malley (Delilah) Vocals and Percussion; Jen Shonwald (Lolita) - Vocals, Guitar and Mandolin; and Thea Shoulson (Jezebel) - Vocals and 12-string Guitar.

Albums available at http://www.cdbaby.com and the FFF website.

Full Frontal Folk - guaranteed to knock your socks off!

These four women (Fatale/Wendy Fuhr, Lolita/Jennifer Schonwald, Jezebel/Thea Shoulson and Delilah/Courtney Malley) were exposed to many different genres of music while growing up in their local folk music community. They have a solid base in the traditional and old timey genre while keeping an open mind and ear towards all kinds of contemporary music, including folk, Rock, Techno and Punk. All of

Harry doc Babad, Editor eMail: etalkeditor@3RFS.org

their songs are delivered with beautiful vocal arrangements, which are at times polished, quirky, haunting, or poignant.

Their instrumentation, including 6 and 12 string guitars, bass, mandolin, fiddle and percussion, never takes away from their powerful voices. The group was formed in 2001 and exploded into the folk scene where they quickly developed a reputation for their phenomenal vocal blends, intricate harmonies and their "Gen-X" attitude. They soon added percussionist extraordinaire Desdemona/Cheryl Prashker to the mix thereby completing the full sensory experience of "Full Frontal Folk".

In the years since their first CD was released their music has focused more and more on Traditional Music, but when they choose to put their spin on a contemporary song, no matter what the genre, the result is thoroughly engaging. This is a CD experience you do not want to miss!



Jezebel Frontal - aka Thea Shoulson, is a folk singer but she doesn't look like one. She likes long walks in the wood, fuzzy blankets, sunsets and safety pins. When she isn't working long hours at the barbed wire factory, she can usually be found singing softly to a basket of puppies or kittens. Raised by a pack of musically inclined wolves, Jezebel had been deeply rooted in traditional music all her life.

Delilah Frontal - aka Courtney Malley, comes by her heartfelt singing style honestly...she comes from a family with a tradition of Irish

seanois singing and story telling that can be traced back to her family's ancestral home, Ireland. As a child, she was raised within the rich Philadelphia folk community being exposed to many different types of live music from the Philadelphia Orchestra to Irish traditional music, from the Philadelphia Folk Festival to community sings. She began singing Irish accapela songs in her teens and later joined the band Somethingblack. Delilah brings to Full Frontal Folk a sweet, evocative voice, a little bit of rhythm/percussion and a killer wardrobe.





Fatale Frontal - aka Wendy Fuhr, began singing Wendy sang folk tune at home with her family as early as she can remember. She started classical violin at 9 years old, but quickly picked up old-time and bluegrass fiddle by accompanying her dad to music festivals. Wendy sang in and was musical director for women's a cappella group in college, and found a love of harmony that has followed her since! She has played on many local Philadelphia singersongwriter and band CDs, and until 2003 was a member of So's Your Mom, a band with Celtic and American influences. Wendy sings and plays fiddle, as well as occasional guitar, for FFF.

Lolita Frontal - aka Jen Schonwald, was brought up surrounded by traditional American, Blues and Celtic folk music and Opera as a child. At an early age she began weaving vocal harmonies as all of her

parents encouraged her to join her voice with theirs. With her mother's (coloratura soprano) influence, Jen, as a young teen, began studying Classical Voice. Jen has sung classically in operettas, musicals, as a choral soloist and as a professional choral member as well as performing Folk Music. Keeping true to her folk roots, she continues to perform Maritime folk and sea chanteys with her father, Steven Schonwald. Her stepfather bought her first six-string guitar



and showed her how to play. Since then, Jen has "borrowed" numerous instruments from her loving fathers. She plays the six and twelve string guitar.

Full Frontal Folk - a brand new band guaranteed to knock your socks off! —Combining the talents of Fatale Frontal (Wendy Fuhr), Lolita Frontal (Jennifer Schonwald), Jezebel Frontal (Thea Shoulson), and Delilah Frontal (Courtney Malley) results in a full sensory experience.

Each is an individually accomplished musician and singer in her own right, but as a band they are combustible. They combine a "Gen-X" attitude with good solid Folk Music sensibilities. Add to the mix their fun sense of personal style and off the wall sense of humor and you'll find yourself immersed in the Full Frontal Folk unique spin on the folk music genre. John Flynn said this is a show (and CD's says doc) you don't want to miss.

Storming the Castle		Sweet Mystery of Life
1	Seven Bridges Road 03:25	1 Cat-Eye Willie Claims His Lover (Carter/Grammer) 04:29
2	Blood & Gold 02:11	2 My Donal/Road to Lisdoonvarna 03:29
3	Anesthesia 02:06	3 This Morning I Am Born Again (W
4	I've Been To Memphis03:09	Guthrie) 03:39
5	Wayfaring Stranger (Trad)	4 Cakes and Ale (Henry Purcell) 01:43
	03:09	5 Annabel Lee (Edgar Allen Poe) 05:17
6	Mr. Right Now 03:24	6 Angeline the Baker/Cuckoo's Nest
7	Colcannon (Trad) 02:10	03:17
8	L & N (Jean Richie)	7 Ladies' Auxiliary (W Guthrie) 01:54
	04:04	8 General Taylor 03:04
9	Didn't Leave Nobody But The Baby (Trad) 02:06	9 The Great Silkie/My Love She's but a Lassie Yet 05:24
10	Silver Thunderbird 03:34	10 I Know My Love/Galway Hornpipe/Red- Haired Boy) 04:07
11	Katie Cruel (Trad)	11 Babylon 01:38
	02:27	12 Wayfaring Stranger (Kindness of
12	Jockey Full Of Bourbon 02:55	Strangers Remix) 07:25
13	Another Train 03:15	
14	Beer Song (Hidden Track) 02:03	

What will you hear? The band shares a love of traditional, old-timey and bluegrass music, as well as contemporary singer-songwriter, pop & punk. Like their musical influences, they want to push the envelope and bring elements of all genres to their repertoire.



Not surprisingly, they succeed with sensitivity and attention to detail. Contemporary songs made famous by The Eagles or Bad Religion may quickly follow traditional songs, like Katie Cruel or Blood and Gold. All songs are delivered with beautiful vocal arrangements, which are at times polished, quirky, haunting, or poignant. Their instrumentation, including 6 and 12 string guitars, bass, fiddle, mandolin and percussion, never takes away from their powerful voices.

Doc_Babad agrees — "I love FFF because they've got it all figured out. They don't take themselves, or us, too seriously. The thing they do take seriously is the music. Their instincts are true and their harmony is like a guilty pleasure. I just can't figure out why they want a quote from me... they're already more famous than I Am. —John Flynn

All I can say is try it! Listen to the music online. Then buy them at CD Baby at http://www.cdbaby.com.

One reviewer's comments intrigued me but I could find no video footage on the Internet. "Only thing better than just listening is WATCHING... This is a great group of songs. I've seen these women perform many of the songs live, and the only thing better than just listening is WATCHING at the same time so you can see for yourself each of the strong, yet strikingly different personalities that stand out as they sing and banter with the audience. I love the lively spirit, their harmony is superb, the fiddlin' is fantastic, and all is enhanced by the beat of their percussionist extraordinaire!" Reviewer: Maggie Mays at CDBaby

3RFS eTALK July 2006 - Page 6 of 6

PS: Now if we're not going to get *Full Frontal Folk* to Tumbleweed but for the best of reasons. Well, all you crazy fans out there... we have some sad news.

"FFF is taking an extended hiatus. No, we are NOT breaking up; we do NOT hate each other and will NOT be saying nasty things or being catty. We don't really know how to do that—guess we're too busy making fart jokes and laughing at ourselves.

"When you put it all together, you can see why we need this break: Jen is balancing single momhood with a fabulous new opportunity with the Angel Band, backed by David Bromberg. Wendy is balancing doctoring with new momhood (Iris turned 6 months old on Feb 9). Wendy will be around, continuing her work as a session violinist. And Courtney is balancing...well, twins, one in each arm, 20+ hours a day (Kieran and Katie turned 3 months old on Feb 25); as well as 2 nearly 15-year-old girls—one daughter and one stepdaughter. Whew! Court will be continuing to play locally with her band of many years, Something Black. Cheryl is busy being Drummer Extraordinaire and playing with all kinds of big cheese types (Peter Yarrow, at last report, among others). There are other things going on, too, but they are too personal to be detailed here. [Check their website for baby pictures.]