

MISSY RAINES & THE NEW HIP

ARTICLES

MISSY RAINES & THE NEW HIP EP RELEASE PARTY Seven-time IBMA Bass Player of the Year, Raines isn't resting on her bluegrass laurels. Instead, she's brought together a startlingly gifted quintet that opts for groove over narrow stylistic consistency. The New Hip's EP shows off the group's range, from the melancholy, folk-leaning "Fingernail Moon" to the swinging funk of "Stop, Drop And Wiggle," which cleaned up in ourstage.com's JVC Newport Jazz Fest Channel song competition in May. Original guitarist Megan McCormick, who appears on the EP, recently departed the group, but phenom Dillon Hodges has made the transition seamless, and the band's musical horizons continue to expand. Forget about categories-this is just good stuff, both deep and enormously enjoyable... **-Jon Weisberger, Nashville Scene, June 18, 2008**

FORMER FRONT PORCH BAND STANDOUT BREAKS OUT ON HER OWN WITH INNOVATIVE NEW GROUP Bassist Missy Raines Hops in Driver's Seat
Would 'Father of Bluegrass' Bill Monroe consider Missy Raines' bass-fronted band sacrilegious? Not if he'd had the opportunity to hear them play, Raines believes: 'Monroe was an innovator.'

When it comes to bluegrass, the bassist rarely gets any of the love heaped on fiddlers, mandolin players or guitarists. While it's nearly impossible to pull off great 'grass without that thumping low end, the bass player rarely gets a chance to shine.

Not so with Missy Raines, who probably tops the very short list of superstar bluegrass bassists. She is a seven-time International Bluegrass Music Association bass player of the year, and is one of the few players to have developed a following for her skill on the bass fiddle.

Raines, who is most recognized for her work with Claire Lynch's Front Porch Band, is coming to Fredericksburg on Saturday as part of the Acoustic Roots Concert series at LibertyTown. She's leading her own band now, the New Hip--and the sounds aren't exactly Bill Monroe's bluegrass.

Born in Short Gap, W.Va., Raines grew up jumping from festival to festival, jamming all the way. Her career circumscribed the traditional bluegrass map. Before long, she was incorporating elements of jazz and rock into her country sound. Like fellow virtuosos Chris Thile, Mark O'Connor and Alison Brown, Raines decided to allow her skills some genre-blurring freedom.

Enter the New Hip, a group of talented young players who are at ease in almost any genre: bluegrass, jazz, swing, classical. "Starting this band was a big risk," Raines said in a recent phone interview.

"But I knew I had to do it or I'd explode. It was frustrating not doing it. There was all of this other stuff in my brain that needed an outlet."

The New Hip is Ethan Ballinger on mandolin, Michael Witcher on resonator guitar, Megan McCormick on guitar, Lee Holland on drums and Dillon Hodges, also on guitar.

Raines selected the players based not only on their talent, but their musical outlook. "I needed players who were versatile, mature and open-minded," she said.

It helps if fans approach listening in the same way. There is nothing simple about the tunes on the band's new self-titled EP--but this is a group that finds comfort in complexity.

In the bluegrass world, "different" can be a death sentence. That's unlikely to be the case with Raines and her band, who balance experimentation with experience. "I wanted the band to be acoustic and electric," Raines said. "I wanted to have lots of options."

If stubborn mountain-music diehards insist on plugging their ears, they will miss a gorgeous application of bluegrass skills. Yes, there are (tasteful) drums and (occasional) electric guitars; but the sound is an honest extension of mountain roots.

"I knew it would be a departure from the tradition I grew up in," Raines said. "I was content with the idea that it would be different."

The band's set at the recent Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival in New York earned a standing ovation from a crowd that wasn't sure what to expect.

Raines takes particular pride in winning over old fans who are cautious about her new band. So far, they love it. It doesn't really surprise Raines.

"Bluegrass is about innovation," she said. "It's surprising that people put such tight fences around it. Monroe was an innovator." **-Jonas Beals, Free Lance Star, July 24, 2008**

MISSY RAINES & THE NEW HIP: EP Raines is one of those musicians who seem to defy all the laws of both nature and logic. How can someone be that small, and that good on such a large instrument? Why would a bass player front a band? She is exemplary at both these tasks.

Missy Raines & The New Hip is the name of that band and this five-piece ensemble lives up to their name.

Today is the release of the group's first recording. The self-titled disc, Missy Raines & The New Hip includes 5 tracks and one free download if you buy before midnight tonight.

"Today is the day we've been waiting for for a long time. We're releasing our new EP, the very first recording by **missy raines & the new hip!** For the bluegrass lovers it'll be obvious that our roots are showing, but we've also stirred a few other things into the pot - a little jazz, a little groove and a whole lot of hip!"

Go listen to this recording expecting to hear traditional bluegrass and you'll surely be disappointed. Go expecting to hear some great music that includes some bluegrass

sensibility, and you'll be very pleased.

The band consists of Raines on upright acoustic bass, Ethan Ballinger on mandolin, Michael Witcher on electric (jazz style) guitar and resonator guitar, Megan McCormick on acoustic guitar, and Lee Holland on drums. Don't worry, he's very tasteful! There are a few special guests on the recording as well.

Don't forget that ordering your copy before midnight tonight will get you in on the exclusive download of Silver Lake.

"We have a special track just for you: Silver Lake, a funky instrumental of mine. This is a previously unreleased studio cut by the new hip. Some of you may remember this tune from my 'My Place in the Sun' cd, complete with James Brown horns, or you may have heard Jim Hurst and I work our chemistry on it live with just bass and guitar. Well, I've always wanted to record this tune with the band to see what would happen with it. The cool thing about Silver Lake is that it continues to live well in whatever context we put it- and it feels like it was made for this band. We had a blast cutting it, and want to share it with you. But this is the only time we're offering it, so be the first on your block to get it and ORDER NOW!!"

The band website has been completely overhauled for this release, with a new look and feel. Look for the band on all the usual social network sites (Facebook, Myspace, ReverbNation) and be sure to drop them a note.

If you're a DJ you can have instant access to the tracks via AirplayDirect.

The band has also entered a contest on Ourstage.com to win a slot at the Newport Jazz Festival. If you're so inclined, you can sign up and vote for the band. Maybe they'll get to represent bluegrass to some jazz fans. I'd be proud to send them as our delegates!

-Brance Gillihan, Bluegrass Blog, May 20, 2008

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT JUNE 2008 - MISSY RAINES AND THE NEW HIP "... I once had a dream about the father of bluegrass, Bill Monroe, pop master Joe Jackson and jazz giant Ray Brown. They were like... friends. They got together and jammed and it was a whole new kind of music, it was very cool. And then I woke up, and I knew what I had to do..." says Missy Raines; but progressive bluegrass is nothing new to her. She launched her career with the experimental bluegrass band Cloud Valley, toured with Eddie and Martha Adcock, was a member of Claire Lynch's Front Porch Band, and won IBMA's Best Bass Player of the Year award 7(!) times. Missy's influences are diverse: Tom Gray, Todd Phillips, Ron Carter, Christian McBride as bass players; Tony Rice, Sam Bush, and David Grisman as three major life changing influences.

Missy's dream finally came true when she brought 4 very talented musicians together to form a new band: Missy Raines and The New Hip. But how did these musicians come together? Missy says: "They are fabulous talents and I feel very lucky to have found them. It took a while to assemble everyone and it wasn't easy. One tactic was to find the players whose playing I loved, but who were already knee deep in their own careers but to ask them about protégés, students, folks they'd heard recently who impressed them. That's exactly how I found Ethan Ballinger- through Matt Flinger. I love Matt's playing

and I wanted someone with that sensibility. Ethan was one of Matt's students till he got so good they started gigging together. I've known Michael for years and when I first heard him play I knew he was special and I knew I wanted him in the band. He's been there since the start. I met Megan at a session in town and Lee through Ethan." She adds: "Word of mouth is a pretty powerful tool. The bigger question is, 'how do you keep them?' I think it comes down to creating a band that you would want to be in yourself. Musically, everyone contributes - ideas are solicited and most arrangements are group efforts. Everyone writes in this band, so we often feature individuals with their own tunes. At the end of the day, I have to ultimately be responsible for what goes out, but I'm constantly aware that I've got amazing musicians around me and I really try to tap into the creativity and synergy that is going on when we're all together. We're all building a trust among us and that takes time but is one of those things that make bands thrive."

There is indeed great chemistry between the band members and it most definitely reflects to the music they create. Their debut 5 song EP recently came out (May 20th 2008). The opening track is a great bluegrass/jazz piece called "Eye of the Liger", an Ethan Ballinger song. Ballinger, 21 years old, started his music career playing rock and blues electric guitar. He is however playing mandolin and mandola now and blending his jazz skills with bluegrass and acoustic music. Ethan, Megan and Michael each take their solo turns on "Eye of he Liger". Please pay close attention to Megan McCormick who was already featured at such a young age on Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's September-October 2006 issue. The founder of the magazine, Dan Miller, says she will be a role model for guitarists regardless of gender and generation. Lee Holland, the most recent addition to the band plays percussion on "Eye of the Liger" and "Basket of Singing Birds".

With her incredible bass playing aside, Missy's steamy vocals are also unique for the genre. She has the voice of a jazz singer mixed with country and pop influences. "Basket of Singing Birds", a song written by Ed Snodderly, really does suit her voice as the verses are on country-pop side and the chorus is on pop-jazz. She did not win the best bass player award for nothing 7 times in a row. When you hear her play you will immediately realize that she treats bass as a lead instrument more than just a rhythm section element. Like on "Stop, Drop & Wiggle", the second instrumental song written by the band. Guitarist Michael Witcher brings a more bluesy sound to this song whereas the guest John R. Burr takes a fusion-like turn on Hammond organ. "Magnolia", written by Ed Snodderly sounds like Nickel Creek meets early John Cowan solo. Last track "Fingernail Moon" is more on the folk side with a little bit of Joni Mitchell feel.

This album is loaded with positive energy. It is in the lyrics, it is in the melodies, it is everywhere. Do not try to pinpoint this band's sound by picking it apart song by song; we actually discourage you to do so. Enjoy the music as a whole and it will get to you quickly when you don't try to categorize it. Tony Rice said, "Playing with Missy is like walking on air", well, listening to Missy Raines and The New Hip feels the same way, truly uplifting... **-TheProgFiles.com, June 2008**

BLUEGRASS BASSIST HIP TO NEW SOUNDS She's a leader, not a follower.

When Missy Raines picks up a bass, she plays it like lead guitar, providing melody as well as accompaniment. "It's always been in my brain to go down the road that was not traveled as much musically and try to do stuff differently," said Raines last week by phone from her Nashville home.

Even though she grew up listening to traditional bluegrass in her West Virginia home, from an early age she remembers being fascinated with what innovative bass players such as Tom Gray — who played with the Country Gentlemen and the Seldom Scene — were doing with the genre. When newgrass came along in the '70s, Raines was presented with more glimpses into what could be done to push the boundaries of bluegrass.

With her current band, the New Hip, Raines blends jazz and rock influences into her original bluegrass tunes. But innovation is nothing new to bluegrass. The genre was being shaken and stirred even as it was being shaped by the hands of founding father Bill Monroe.

"He was innovative from the get-go," Raines says of Monroe. "People are always supposed to be pushing the boundaries because that's what Monroe built the whole thing on. That's what he was doing, trying to create something new and create new sounds."

Raines' work has been described as a jazzier version of Nickel Creek. Though she acknowledges the jazz influence, she says she thinks that the biggest thing her band has in common with Nickel Creek is its unique sound. "We're doing all original material, trying to create new music together that only the five of us can make," she says.

This year Raines has been rewarded for her groundbreaking playing, receiving the International Bluegrass Music Association's Bass Player of the Year award for the seventh time.

Though known for her progressive approach to bluegrass bass over the years with innovative artists including Eddie Adcock, Raines has gotten a large following from her stint with traditional bluegrass artist Claire Lynch, whom she's been with since 1995.

When she began fronting the New Hip, some purists weren't pleased. But Raines is winning them over, one fan at a time. On a recent New Hip tour, an audience member told her after the show that he was a diehard bluegrass fan and didn't think he'd like her new direction, but came anyway because he was a fan of hers. "Then he got this big smile and he said, 'But I loved it!'" Raines says. "I thought that was such a huge victory because he stayed the whole night, and he was so convinced that he wasn't gonna like it."

Although there's an obvious jazz influence in Raines' work with the New Hip, the sound is just as much about rock as evidenced by the band's "Eye Of The Liger" clip featured on YouTube.

Her MySpace site features samples from a new EP scheduled for a May 2008 release, including "Fingernail Lake," a straight-up bluegrass tune, and "Inside Out," a rock song with a jazzy feel.

"You can't put a label on something that's musical when it simply hits your ears and lays there and you just like it," Raines says of the difficulty in pigeonholing her sound. "You may not be able to define it at that moment, but you just like it."

The New Hip is a perfect description of the music, a blend of the new and old. Although the word hip has dropped out of most people's vocabulary, it still resonates with Raines. "I never stopped saying it, so that shows you where I am," she says, laughing. "I'm a bass player from West Virginia — what can I say?"

In addition to its reference to being on the cutting edge of cool, New Hip has a more personal meaning for the bassist. Born with a birth defect, Raines has been in line for a hip replacement all her life. After having it done three years ago, she decided it would be doubly effective as a band name.

"One of my favorite records is 'Birth of the Cool,' " she says of Miles Davis' 1950 release that changed the face of jazz. "And I thought, the cool and the hip, and then I thought, the new hip, that's what we are," she says amid peals of laughter. "It just works, and if people know about the hip then they laugh, and that makes me happy if they laugh."

-Grant Britt, gotriad.com, January 5, 2008

MISSY RAINES COMES TO SAN DIEGO Speaking of great bands, the new Missy Raines band, Missy Raines and the New Hip, will be making a special appearance on June 8 at Acoustic Music San Diego in the church at 4650 Mansfield at 7:30 pm. [Seven]-time winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association's 'bass player of the year' award, Missy is a great bluegrass bass player and is considered by many to be the best there is.

Members of her new band include three hot young talents: Michael Witcher on dobro and lap steel, Megan McCormick on flat pick guitar and electric guitar, and Ethan Ballinger on mandolin. The New Hip is making some of the greatest music you will ever hear - very innovative and bursting with talent. Although grounded in bluegrass, the New Hip and its players move into a new sphere all their own. If you like only hard-core traditional bluegrass, this may not be the group for you, but if you love great music and great musicians who have earned their chops in bluegrass, don't miss this special appearance. **-Dwight Worden, San Diego Troubadour, June 2007**

BLUEGRASS BASSIST MISSY RAINES HITS THE ROAD WITH HER DREAM BAND

Usually when someone in bluegrass gets a new hip, it's because the old one gave out after years of lugging a doghouse bass around. But Missy Raines & the New Hip are a whole 'nuther thing.

As a member of Claire Lynch's band, Raines has more International Bluegrass Music Association awards than any other bassist – [seven] so far. But bluegrass isn't all she does. Raines says the idea for her new band came from a dream she had in which Bill Monroe, Joe Jackson and jazz bassist Ray Brown jammed together. (How come I don't ever have dreams like that?) To help make her dream come true, she enlisted some of Nashville's hottest young guns, including Dobro man Mike Witcher and 20-year-old

guitarist-vocalist Megan McCormick. The music? Think a jazzier Nickel Creek, or a (slightly) feistier Alison Brown.

The band's debut album isn't due till next year, but you can get an early taste next week as the band plays Sunday at the Freight & Salvage, 1111 Addison St. in Berkeley, and Tuesday at Don Quixote's, 6275 Highway 9 in Felton. **-Shay Quillen, San Jose Mercury News, May 31, 2007**

WHEN IT RAINES... Could bluegrass-jazz be the next rap-rock? Probably not. Still, Fleck and Corea obviously aren't the only cats melding the two genres. You'll also find the blend in the music of Missy Raines and the New Hip.

Raines has been adding a jazzy sensibility to her bluegrass ramblings for years. And she's been well rewarded for her efforts. Most impressively, she recently won a record [seven]th Bass Player of the Year Award from the International Bluegrass Music Association.

Raines will lead her Hip band-mates (guitarists Michael Witcher and Megan McCormick, mandolinist/guitarist Ethan Ballinger and percussionist David Heyer) in concert June 3 at the Freight and Salvage Coffee House in Berkeley and June 5 at Don Quixote's International Music Hall in Felton. **- insidebayarea.com, May 2007**