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"JOKING" RELEASED; COLLEGE TOUR AROUND CORNER

A cassette single featuring "Joking" and "Airplane" has recently been released. The single showed up in stores the end of August and the promotional video was part of VH-1's "You pick it we play it" Friday, September 18. It is up against Bruce Springsteen's "Leap of Faith" and an Eric Clapton/Elton John duet, but if it wins it will be played in the VH-1 countdown the weekend of September 25. The teaser that they showed had Amy and Emily playing live and also some footage of people in a vacant lot holding up signs with different messages.

Plans for a college tour in November and December seem more and more definite each day. Emily and Amy played Central Park in New York City on September 20 with the Ellen James Society and will be heading for Europe soon. The college tour is expected to begin in the northeast, ticket sales should be announced any time now.

Kristen Hall has recorded a show for National Public Radio's "E-Town" which should be airing in early October. She will be touring the Northeast in mid to late October, be sure to check her out if you get the chance.

If you have not yet signed up for Amy's Daemon Records mailing list, I highly recommend it. It is a great source for information on the Ellen James Society, Kristen Hall, and Gerard McHugh. In addition, they are now offering T-shirts. To get on the mailing list write:

Daemon Mailing List
P.O. Box 1207
Decatur, Georgia
30031-1207

Indigo Girls
Thursday
August 20, 1992
Pier 62/63
Seattle, Washington

Taken from The Morning News Tribune August 14, 1992.

Girls night: The Indigo Girls gave fans a preview of their new album last September at Bumbershoot.

Now the Georgia duo is returning to Seattle with the whole "Rites of Passage" at their disposal. The album lives up to the promise of "Ghost" and "Cedar Tree," two moving songs Emily Saliers and Amy Ray played in simple acoustic form last year.

When Saliers and Ray play Thursday night at Pier 62/63, they will have their guitars as well as a backing band that includes bass, drums, cello and violin to provide more of the orchestral background that the CD versions of their songs offer.

Despite their accessible and beautiful harmonies, the Indigo Girls never have had much chart success. Their latest single, "Galileo," did reach the Top 10 of the Billboard modern rock charts, thanks at least in part to a cool video.

Like Van Halen's "Right Now," the "Galileo" video includes written messages. Unlike Van Halen, which managed only greeting-card sentiments, Ray and Saliers gave much thought to the subject of the song, the possibility of past lives, and served up some profound phrases.

An example: "I gave milk ungrudgingly to a man with rough hands who ate my brother." (This statement, by Saliers, went with a picture of a cow).

Ray suggested this past life: "I

was a priest. I thought about God and sex all the time."

Heavy, huh? Well, both also tried to claim they were "cute fuzzy bear cubs." Ray and Saliers dress up as several characters in the video, from a simpleton of a pope to a gangster to Salaam, princess of beer.

And it ends with humor. "Maybe we're more than who we think we are," words on the screen suggest. "Or maybe not."

So much for the Indigo Girls' gloomy rep.

Matthew Sweet, a man who has fought the tide of grunge to make his guitar pop successful, will open the show.

Sweet's latest album, "Girlfriend," has yielded a pair of hits, the title tune and "I've Been Waiting," both helped on MTV by creative video animation.

Another Sweet song is on the new "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" soundtrack. "Silent City" is actually several years old, but like a vampire, it's found a way to extend its life.

Indigo Girls
Thursday
August 20, 1992
Pier 62/63
Seattle, Washington

Having been lucky enough to obtain tickets to the long sold out Indigos Seattle show, I must say I felt fairly privileged when upon arriving at the concert site, the non-ticket holders pounced and then whined when they realized no one was giving up any hard-to-come by tickets. It was only 2:00, after all. Since the line was still fairly short, and the sun was hot, my buddy and I went in search of some libation. Upon emerging a couple of hours later, we were stunned to find the line had exceeded our wildest imaginations. Fortunately we ran into another friend, (already in line) and by 6:15, we found ourselves inside the fenced in Pier.

As the breeze picked up, around 7 PM Kristen Hall sauntered out and played a short but intense set. I thought she had a cool, distinctive voice, and I was impressed with her songs. Almost exactly 15 minutes after Kristen Hall's set ended, Matthew Sweet took the stage. His set lasted around 45 minutes, and I used the time to absorb the stage and the beauty of Seattle's waterfront. From the Smoking Section, I spied at least a couple of hundred unfortunate souls without tickets, straining to hear what they were unable to see, several boats full of people had dropped anchor behind the stage and were chatting with concert goers on the Pier. I found my way back to my seat as the sun began to set.

By this time, Matthew Sweet was putting the wraps on his set, which was an eclectic mix of pop psychedelia and fiery guitars. Even though I enjoyed him, and his band, I was ready for the real thing. Somebody must have been listening, for only moments later, Amy and Emily took the stage with M. Sweet and Co. to perform a thundering version of Neil Young's "Cortez The Killer". Upon leaving the stage, the girls promised they'd be right back. My excitement had definately been sparked.

Prior to the girls re-entering, I reflected back on the soundcheck I had heard earlier in the day. Even though we only caught about 10 minutes of it, it was among the best 10 minutes of Indigo stuff I'd ever heard. Amy did "Hand Me Downs", and then Emily did a short but exquisite version of Joni Mitchell's "Cactus Tree", it was really amazing

My focus was suddenly drawn to the stage, where I could hear the beginnings of "Galileo". The sun had almost set, and the crowd came to life as Emily and Amy kicked off what would become a two hour set. Since the show was "Festival Seating", and since the area in the front of the stage was roped off, the crowd had received a batch of mixed messages. We were told to "Dance, but only on the sides". The Girls took it all in stride, with Emily trying to get a crowd reaction by telling us "We don't like ya'll bein' so far away, so, you know, whatever!". Not a soul moved. No one wanted to offend anyone else, especially the Girls. We remained seated.

I had pretty much accepted the fact that I was not going to get any closer than my 30th row seat. I settled in and enjoyed what would become a "Rites Of Passage" tribute - they played everything except "Cedar Tree", "Nashville", and "Airplane". For me the highlights really began when the Girls began discussing the Republican Convention and what a big joke it was. Shortly after, they began a rousing version of "Pushing The Needle Too Far", and my attention span was hooked. Other highlights included "Crazy Game" and "Joking", which featured Seattlite Barbara Marino on Sax (she also plays on EJS' debut album), "Jonas And Ezekial", "Prince Of Darkness", and the song that finally brought the house down, "Chickenman". Immediately following the afore-mentioned balls-to-the-walls rocker, I decided "Screw it! I'm going up front!". About 50 or so other people had the same idea, and after a crowd sing-a-long of "Watershed" the barriers finally broke. I looked to the right just in time to witness a stage rush, with Security nowhere in sight. I raced to the front area as quickly as possible, and was rewarded with a space right against the stage to Amy's right. Emily laughed and said it was great that they could finally see our faces. Soon, too soon, they left the stage, and returned to finish with Dylan's "Tangled Up In Blue" and "Closer To Fine". Amy and Emily said "Goodnight" and walked off stage, obviously impressed by the crowd's excited reaction. The lights went up, and as they did, the crowd only yelled louder. Almost immediately Amy popped back on stage; it was pretty clear she and Emily were both overcome by the crowd's cheering. They thanked us for being so supportive, and then launched into "American Tune", a perfect ending for an evening on the shore. For a moment after the song, no one said or did anything; I was pretty dazzled myself. Suddenly the air was filled with cheers, whistles, screams and applause for more, but it was over. After shaking hands with some people in the crowd from the stage, the Girls departed with waves and smiles. I was so pumped after the show, I made the forty mile drive to Tacoma in about a half hour. Upon arriving, I began making preparations for my journey to Portland.

Karin Dalesky
Tacoma, Washington

Indigo Girls
Thursday
August 20, 1992
Pier 62/63
Seattle, Washington

Taken from The Seattle Times August 21, 1992.

Indigo Girls touch everyone

■ Indigo Girls, Matthew Sweet, Kristen Hall, last night, Pier 62-63 "Summer Nights At The Pier" series.

by Ken Hunt
Times staff reporter

In the past four times the Indigo Girls have passed through Seattle, they've played everywhere from Peaches Music store to the Coliseum. No matter the venue, they've managed to create a community out of the crowd.

Last night they were under

open space at Pier 62-63, and that community took on a campfire sing-out quality as the Girls played an hour and a half of their warm, touching songs.

Singer-guitarists Emily Saliers and Amy Ray have always been thought of as two distinct personalities — Ray, the gritty and direct one, Saliers, the more fragile and pretty — even when they fuse their voices and instruments into one being. But last night they emanated a sense of unity unmatched by previous concerts, not only with each other, but with their new band.

Although most of the crowd pleasers in an Indigo set are from their eponymous second album, they drew liberally from the more recent releases "Nomads, Indians and Saints" and "Rites Of Passage." Beginning with the current single "Galileo," the Indigo Girls alternately ripped and wafted through their material.

Backed by violin, cello, bass and drums — Sara Lee, formerly of the Gang of Four and the B-52s, contributed some fine, fluid bass-lines — Ray and Saliers divided the lead vocal work fairly evenly. "Prince Of Darkness" was the first sing-along of the night, although with a little on-stage prompting. They hardly needed to prompt at all for songs like "Tried To Be True," with opening act Kristen Hall on backing vocals and "Kid Fears."

One big highlight was "Cheatin' Man," a Middle East-influenced folk tune propelled by thundering percussion and swooping strings. The dancing went from joyful hopping to a sort of ritual groove.

Only when Ray and Saliers did their traditional solo songs did the disparity of their deliveries rise to the surface. Ray alone performed "Romeo And Juliet," her raw belting delivery rising into the night. Like the time she ended up performing "Blood And Fire" a cappella during a 1989 Moore show, she drew the loudest response and received the first standing ovation. Saliers performed the weblike, jazzy reflection "History Of Us," receiving respectful but subdued applause.

Even the boats that usually drop anchor around the pier for these concerts began blowing their horns prior to the encore. Band in tow, the Indigo Girls obliged with a cover of Bob Dylan's "Tangled Up In Blue," done alternately in folk-rock and blues styles, and "Closer To Fine."

Security opened the exits after that, which was a mistake: The Girls returned to the stage for an a cappella duet. The crowd seemed to double in size.

Matthew Sweet performed a pleasant if derivative set of modern-rock formula. Beginning with his radio hit "Divine Intervention," he continued through its sound-alike "Evangeline" and about half a dozen other songs indebted to late-'70s power-pop and heavy with Sweet's woe-is-me lyrics.

Hall showed a lot of guts and intuitive musicianship during her extremely short set. In terms of voice and guitar playing, she sounds very much like Amy Ray (who runs Hall's label, Daemon). Songs like "I Should Know" and "Trouble Times" showed how Hall is emotional where Sweet is just maudlin.

Indigo Girls
Friday
August 21, 1992
Oaks Amusement Park
Portland, Oregon

Still reeling from the show in Seattle, I drove from Tacoma to Naselle, Wa. (Pop. 200 maybe). 140 miles and 2 Indigo tapes later, I arrived and crashed hard. I knew I'd need some kind of sleep, and it turned out I was right.

The following afternoon we arrived at Oaks Amusement Park around 1:30. Again a small line, but quickly growing. I didn't see the tour buses, and since it was an amusement park, I was coerced into riding anything twisting, spinning, or clinking up a giant hill. Throughout the afternoon bits of the soundcheck wafted over the trees. Again at another "Festival Seating" show; I wanted to be assured of a good seat. We got in line at around 5:00.

Upon walking in, I knew something was definately happening; the undertow of excitement was rapidly building and the show hadn't yet started. Set on the banks of the Wilamette River, the park was the ideal place for an Indigo show, or any show for that matter. The clouds threatened rain, but scattered just before showtime. My friend from Naselle had never seen the Girls; she was about to get a serious dose of Indigo.

We walked up within 15 feet of the stage. About 5 feet from the stage was a white picket fence with sharp points surrounding the front of the stage. It didn't matter too much, since it was an "open air festival" and we had gotten real close. I knew once the Girls hit the stage, everyone would be standing anyway.

Kristen Hall played an even shorter set than she had in Seattle. I was a little disappointed; I was hoping to hear more of her stuff. I went to get a beer and noticed that the fenced-in field where the concert was held was becoming full - fast. Various food booths were set up selling everything from egg rolls to BBQ and lines were long. By the time I returned, the front area by the stage was full, and my timing was perfect. Again the Girls joined Mathew and the boys for "Cortez" and everyone made a rush for the stage, the picket fence stopped us. We ended up as close as anyone could get, with no one in front of us. Shortly after the stage emptied, two roadies came over and said they were going to move the fence, but we had to be cool. Cheers arose as the obstructive fence was moved and we took our places, again to Amy's right. This time, though, I was thrilled that I would see a whole show up close and personal.

Upon arriving on stage, Amy reminded us not to "Smoosh each other", and the band began with "Galileo". I glanced behind me and found at least a thousand people standing pressed against one another. If it had been any other show, I probably would have made a beeline to the side of the mob. I stood firm. The set remained pretty much the same as in Seattle but "Welcome Me" and "Hammer And A Nail" replaced "Pushing The Needle" and "World Falls". The crowd was in Heaven; I have rarely seen such devotion. Even when Amy botched up the beginning of "Jonas And Ezekial", cheers of encouragement arose as she tried to quell her laughter. Unlike the Seattle show the Portland fans needed no urging - everyone danced, swayed, and sang to each song. The Girls responded well to the crowd, although they were not as talkative as the evening before. Amy wore her painted cutoffs, a black t-shirt, a long sleeved striped shirt, and her combat boots, while Emily opted for a t-shirt and shorts, with high tops.

Again, "Chickenman" was the show-stopper, but Emily's solo rendition of "Fare Thee Well" was simply beautiful. Barbara Marino again popped on stage during "Joking" and "Crazy Game" and Kristen Hall joined in on an acoustic version of "Tried To Be True". I saw probably the most intense version of "Kid Fears" I've seen to date, and with that, Emily and Amy left the stage. Upon returning, they again did "Tangled Up In Blue" and then launched into a free-for-all rendition of "Closer To Fine". Jerry Marotta paced the front of the stage with a microphone, popping it into the crowd whenever the phrase "closer to fine" came up, and the crowd loved it. Unfortunately, it was over too fast, and we were instructed to exit through the side gates. My friend from Naselle is still raving to anyone who will listen about the show.

Overall, I thought the band both nights was a great enhancement, but it seemed to take away much of the intimacy associated with the I.G.'s. Their solo numbers, though, more than made up for it. The Seattle fans need to get with the program, and cut loose a bit more. However, the spirit of the Sixties is alive and well in Portland; I thought all of the love-ins went out the door when Nixon took over the country. I'm so glad I was wrong.

Karin Dalesky
Tacoma, Washington

Indigo Girls
Friday
August 21, 1992
Oaks Amusement Park
Portland, Oregon

Taken from The Sunday Oregonian August 23, 1992.

Indigo Girls engaging at Oaks Park

■ A summer sunset offers a great setting as 4,000 flock to a concert at the amusement park

By KIP RICHARDSON

Special writer, The Oregonian

Attitude and atmosphere. As essential to pop music as guitars and drums. They're what attract large audiences to some performers while equally gifted musicians wallow in obscurity.

And it was an appealing attitude and atmosphere that drew 4,000 people to see Indigo Girls and Matthew Sweet Friday night at Oaks Park.

For years, the only music you could hear at Oaks Park featured venerable Don Simmons at the keyboard of the mighty Wurlitzer in the amusement park's skating rink. That's too bad, because the park is a terrific spot for a show. The stage was set up in a large field near the entrance and with the Portland skyline gleaming in the distance, the river quietly flowing nearby and a few amber hued clouds lurking overhead.

Like many summer evenings in the park, the show started off feeling more like a picnic than a concert, with people chatting, eating and watching the sun slowly slide behind the West Hills. Against this backdrop, the opening set by Matthew Sweet unfortunately became just part of the atmosphere for many

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people.

Part of the problem was the sound. Not wanting to offend the park's neighbors, the volume was kept low and for anyone more than a short way from the stage, the band's sound had about as much tone as a radio playing in the distance. At one point Sweet quipped: "No one is complaining about the volume so we must not be loud enough. Try to imagine we're twice as loud."

But those who listened closely were treated to music that at its best attained a rollicking turbulence, with bouyant melodies bobbing atop seething guitars. Songs such as "Divine Intervention" and "Girlfriend" had a kind of Mona Lisa appeal, their attitude half way between a smile and a sneer.

It was also attitude — and a great band — that made Indigo Girls more than just your average folk duo. There is an undeniable honesty and conviction to the Girls' approach. When they sang: "The world seems spent and our president has no idea who the masses are," they struck a resonant emotional chord that rang true for many in the crowd.

Amy Ray is the tougher, more aggressive of the two, her phrasing and tone reminiscent of John Cougar Mellencamp. But it was the more

introspective tunes by Emily Saliers that were most effective. Backed by the supple, inventive playing of bassist Sara Lee and drummer Jerry Marotta, Saliers' "Virginia Woolf" beautifully evoked an enlightening, intimate relationship between the great writer and a solitary soul, Woolf providing the reader with a "key to the room of your own."

The only real flaw in the show was a lack of consistent musical inventiveness. Appropriately, performing in the shadows of the Ferris wheel and the Mad Mouse, the Indigo Girls' music was as entertaining as a roller coaster ride and just as predictable — lots of ups and downs and exhilarating moments, but never any doubt where it was going.

Indigo Girls
Sunday
August 23, 1992
The Greek Theater
Berkeley, California

Taken from The East Bay Free Weekly August 28, 1992.

At the Greek Theater, Sunday,
August 23.

By Derk Richardson

The stench of lies and gas passed as family values at the recent Republican conclave were still fouling the atmosphere last week, at least until late Sunday afternoon when the moral climate was scrubbed clean by the Atlanta-based Indigo Girls and friends at the Greek Theater in Berkeley. The sun poured down like coconut oil on 8,500 grinning faces. Except for a slight haze caused by the smoke from distant northern California fires, the sky shone bright and clear. And from the stage, crisp contemporary folk and power-pop sounds radiated out in cheerful melodies and glistening harmonies, buoying the spirits of the sold-out crowd and likely leaving the vast majority feeling renewed in this season of incredible cynicism and deceit.

Some people I know, and probably a good number of critics, have a hard time with the Indigo Girls. On the surface, where 28-year-old Amy Ray and 29-year-old Emily Saliers blend their not-so-Southern voices like gritty brown sugar and velvety whipping cream, where their acoustic guitars are both strident and crystalline, and where the tunes bounce merrily with an occasional dip into the dark side, what's not to like? Even when they play at being a band, augmenting their woman-identified variation of the Everly Brothers/Simon and Garfunkel duo tradition with the accoutrements of rock (electric bass and drums) and art-rock (violin and cello), the Indigo Girls—"Saliers and Ray" sounds too much like an accounting firm—exude an almost irresistible charm.

But down there in the lyrics lurk a heavenly host of images and concepts that can unsettle atheists, agnostics, secularists, and rock critics. Ray and Saliers burst out of Geor-

Lo, the Rich Indigos



By Ron Delany

Down there in the lyrics lurk a heavenly host of images that can unsettle atheists, agnostics, secularists, and rock critics.

gia onto the pop scene in 1989 with *Indigo Girls*, their first major label release. (Their "real" first album, *Strange Fire*, was recorded in 1987 but issued by Epic as a follow-up when *Indigo Girls* sold surprisingly well.) Their pivotal song was the single "Closer to Fine," which expressed the existential angst and quest for identity of the college and post-grad generation—"I went to the doctor, I went to the mountains/

I looked to the children, I drank from the fountain"—but resolves itself in uncommon optimism—"I spent four years prostrate to the higher mind, got my paper/ And I was free... The less I seek my source from some definitive/ The closer I am to fine." Fine, so far.

Other songs, however, dealt more explicitly with good and evil, spiritual and religious themes cast in such images as the "Prince of Darkness"

and the "Land of Canaan." On subsequent recordings—a promo-only CD that included the Indigos' trademark encore, Paul Simon's "American Tune," and Elton John's "Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters"; the 1990 *Nomads Indians Saints* album; a live set from 1991, *Back on the Bus, Y'all*; and the recent *Rites of Passage*—skeptics could find plenty of reasons to dismiss the Girls as back-to-the-land, New Age Christian mystics with a penchant for pretentious poetry and mushy philosophizing, and a nostalgia for '60s folk-rock, and for whom love is just another twelve-step program. Plus they hang out with Joan Baez, for gawdsakes!

But if Ice T and Nirvana reflect a harder reality that is closer to the day-to-day alienation of inner city youth and suburban teens, the Indigo Girls are nonetheless speaking to and for a sizable constituency that apparently wants to hear and express a feeling of connectedness—to one another, to their forebears, to the planet, to "a higher power" in the cosmos?—while the "American Way" degenerates into a fragment-

ed society and a cultural wasteland.

Granted, the Indigo Girls are making it more difficult for some of us to hang in there quite so devotedly while they overpopulate their songs with overwritten paeans to such guiding lights as Galileo, Virginia Woolf, or Jonas and Ezekial (all on the new album) and simultaneously fail to make significant leaps in their hook-writing abilities. But while they sometimes sound over-educated and under-credited, at least they have grown capable of making the occasional joke at their own expense: "You know me I take everything so seriously," Saliers sings in "Galileo"; and in "Airplane," faced with her mortality, she feels genuinely "nearer my God to thee" and starts "making a deal inspired by gravity." Moreover, there is a certain attractive bravery in the way Ray and Saliers handle themselves, in terms of sexual preference (which has become a non-issue even while their audience is rife with female couples), in their commitment to substantial values (such as peace, justice, human rights, ethical farming), and in their willingness to voice their own wonder ("Everywhere I turn, all the beauty just keeps shaking me," from "World Falls").

The word "wonderful" is the operative description for even an imperfect Indigo Girls concert, like the nearly two-hour show they gave last Sunday. Opening with "Galileo" and three more songs from *Rites of Passage*, Saliers and Ray spun out twenty tunes, accompanying themselves on guitars and joined by various combinations of their supporting four-piece band—Sara Lee on bass guitar, Jerry Marotta on drums, *Desire* and Rolling Thunder tour-era Dylan accom-

panist Scarlet Rivera on electric violin, and Jane Scarpantoni on cello. Ray uttered a couple of comments about how strange it was to play in the daytime and admitted to hitting a few wrong notes (which were virtually undetectable through the billows of Saliers' harmonies and contrapuntal lines). And Ray's solo rendering of Mark Knopfler's "Romeo and Juliet" had the kind of close, smoldering intensity upon which Bruce Springsteen built his live reputation.

Intimacy with their audience has always been crucial to the Indigos' appeal. (At the last minute, the gals scheduled a Monday night show at the 450-seat Great American Music Hall with their buddy Baez and a host of special guests.) If they were a bit awestruck at the sight of the sun-drenched amphitheater tightly packed with an adoring homogeneous-looking crowd, and if their energy and focus meandered at times, Ray and Saliers nevertheless managed to zone back in and establish that crucial link—whether by chatting about Emily's green Doc Martens (not Converse high-tops, although "they're cool, too, not to endorse a commercial product"), confessing their feelings of intimidation ("it feels like we're at a football game... and we're on the field"), or gushing about how beautiful life is.

Mostly it was the music that pumped up the crowd to the point of thunderous standing ovations after the ostensible closer, "Kid Fears," and the first two encores, Dylan's "Tangled Up in Blue" (with one verse taken as a slow blues shuffle) and "Closer to Fine." (The a cappella "American Tune"—unlike past local concerts, sung without a cameo by Baez—was the breathless finale.) The different arrangements of their folk-rock sound—full band with violin searing through the mix and cello shading it with a Beatles/Velvet Underground hue; hard-edged guitars-bass-and-drums quartets; basic acoustic guitar duets; one string-heavy chamber music setting;

added vocals from concert opener Kristen Hall—suited the songs and helped avoid the potential pitfall of Indigo sameness. The high points included "Joking" and "World Falls," early on, and "Chickenman" and "Watershed" near the end. Missing were such seeming staples as "1 2 3," "Hammer and a Nail," "Love's Recovery," and "You and Me of the 10,000 Wars." No one in the crowd seemed to mind the absences, though; they were too busy singing along or mouthing the words to everything else, even the newest songs.

Many in the audience must be such committed fans that, like Deadheads, they are familiar with every Indigo tangent, such as Kristen Hall, who records for Amy Ray's independent Daemon Records label (the other main Daemon act is an intriguing post-REM band, the Ellen James Society). Hall played only five songs (four from her fine second album, *Fact & Fiction*) during her seventeen-minute opening slot, but heard requests for songs from her first recording, *Real Life Stuff*, and made a lasting impression with her hard strumming and powerful grainy/pretty voice. She plays her own show Saturday, September 5, at the Starry Plough.

Between Hall and Indigo Girls, Matthew Sweet provided an upbeat rock'n'roll change of pace from the folkier frame of the show. If Indigo Girls are squarely within the Dylan/singer-songwriter tradition, Sweet, who first emerged with a Georgia band called Oh-OK, comes straight out of the Beatles, circa *Abbey Road* and the white album (although the acoustic-based "Thought I Knew You" could be played back to back with "You Won't See Me" from *Rubber Soul*), with nods to Lou Reed and Big Star. Despite a minimal degree of charisma, Sweet came off even better live, fronting a crunchy and eminently tuneful quartet, than he does on his latest album, *Girlfriend*, where such songs as "I've Been Waiting," "Winaona" ("not about a movie star," he claimed), "You Don't Love Me," and "Girlfriend" feature the precise but un-band-like instrumental work of New York heavies Robert Quine (guitar) and Fred Maher (drums), as well as rhythm guitar from fellow power-popper Lloyd Cole.

Another Sweet influence—the

psychedelic guitar of Neil Young—was made explicit when he closed his 45-minute set with "Cortez the Killer," turning lead guitarist Ivan Julian loose on a long, jagged solo. Amy Ray and Emily Saliers casually walked on to add their voices and guitars and give the crowd its first Indigo glimpse. Although he may benefit from the music industry's current obsession with "alternative rock" (a concept about as clear as "family values"), Sweet seems a perfect candidate for permanent semi-popular status, one of those abundantly talented individuals who becomes a relatively private taste.

Who knows if his presence on the Indigo Girls tour is garnering Sweet new fans? His hard pop-rock sound and more direct boy-finds-girl-loses-girl lyrics are in a different league, although he did open with his wry waiting-for-God song, "Divine Intervention." The collaborative, inclusive aesthetic of the entire concert was a refreshing corrective to the us-and-them, who-do-you-trust divisiveness that is being sold as political culture by the Bush-Quayle snake oil peddlers. (Although they deal in few specifics, Saliers wore a Clinton-Gore bumper sticker across the leg of her cut-off overalls.) If Saliers and Ray have already backed themselves into a corner that Bob Dylan foresaw in the 1960s and fell into during the '70s, trying to resolve too many mysteries and come up with answers to unfathomable questions, I applaud their willingness to put themselves on the line as moral examples. As Saliers sings in her "Let It Be Me," "I'm among friends trying to see beyond the fences of our own backyard... if the world is night, shine my life like a light."

INDIGO GIRLS

Rites of Passage
(Epic)

Produced by Peter Collins



Since their initial EP venture in 1986, the Indigo Girls have witnessed a succession of folksy discs with cerebral lyrics and quality songwriting, that flirt heavily with mainstream appeal. This fifth Epic release is no exception. What is significantly different about the pair's sound is the creation of a careful musical balance. Where Amy Ray's dark acoustics and plaintive vocal thrusts at times presented too uncomfortable a contrast to Emily Saliers' Joni Mitchell sweetness, these polar properties twine well in the new material.

This more cohesive sound is also marked by richer-sounding production; an interesting use of Latin and African percussion, mandolin, cello and more complex string arrangements. Staples of their style, such as the fine winding of Ray's alto crackling and her partner's crystal outstretched notes, still complement lyrics that go way beyond the conventional acoustic crying. In "Chicken Man," Ray expounds on the philosophy of a dust-coated man she met at his junk-strewn home off some Southern highway. When Saliers questions in "Galileo," a song pondering reincarnation: "How long till my soul gets it right?/Can any human being ever reach that kind of light?" we know we can count on the two songwriters for men-

tal fodder.

Rites Of Passage also builds upon the Saliers/Ray tradition of layering wonderful harmonies, strum and twangs with guest artists. This release joins them with the likes of Cooper Seay of the Elle James Society, the Roches, members of Siouxsie and the Banshees and Jackson Browne. The juicier results of these collaborations occur in songs like "Galileo," a rhythmically intoxicating cut, where Jot Mellencamp's violinist Lisa Germano weaves in her strings delicately; or where the Roches add war back-up lulls to "Airplane"—Saliers' commentary on the anxieties of flying and fear of being separated from the familiar.

One of the most riveting cuts off the album "Romeo & Juliet" - is the lone song not written by an Indigo Girl. This Dire Straits cover features an anguished Ray on solo acoustics, as she grinds out pain for a lost love. If you are among those that consider folk music lacking the dynamics for a Nineties audience, this rendition will prove you grievously mistaken. But then, this entire disc might do just that.

—Karen Iris Tucker

KRISTEN HALL

fact and fiction
(Daemon/Sky)

Produced by Don McCollister

Carrying on the introspective acoustic folk-rock tradition à la Tracy Chapman, Shawn Colvin and Two Nice Girls, Michigan-born singer/guitarist Kristen Hall lays down a thicker urbane balladeering somewhere between Carly Simon's *Hotcake* years and Melissa Etheridge's visceral cool.

Inspired by an adventure-packed *Charlie's Angles* episode, Hall moved to Georgia for a rich dose of what she thought would be life-fulfilling experiences. Guess she got them. By 1990 BMG offered her a publishing deal and now she's on the road to refining her own direction.

Fact and fiction features Hall's wistful vocals and pastoral guitar passages juiced with the help of Indigo Girls guitarist Emily Saliers, Psychedelic Furs

guitarist John Ashton, and former League of Gentlemen and Gang Of Four bassist Sara Lee. The B-52's Cindy Wilson also contributes a vocal layer or two on "Too Long Running."

"Colder" imitates the delicate guitar work and melody line of George Harrison's "Here Comes the Sun," and the beautiful chord changes texturize Hall's earthy rasp on "I Should Know" (the only uncredited song). Lyrics are replete with life's entanglements, and her coffee house rock's been spruced up by producer Don McCollister's pristine recording. But if Hall continues en route she'll end up pegged another post-beatnik, intellectual granola chick.

—Brooke Wentz

FROM

Creem
AUG. / SEPT. 92



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Taken from "Beyond Blue Jeans", Scene June 11, 1992.

Emily on . . .

being too serious.

"You know, it's funny. I consider myself a very happy and fairly well-adjusted person. It's just a lot more easy for me to write a depressing or heavy song than to write a lighthearted one. Hopefully, as an artist, you're sympathetic enough to empathize, then you can write about it."

"Jonas and Ezekial".

"I think Cooper just recorded a bunch of stuff, whatever came to mind. It was a long process. But it's so funny when you back up the tape and you listen, you get some really cool stuff like that siren effect, who knows where that came from? Maybe next time we'll do backward vocals and then we can do that kind of stuff, 'Amy and Emily are too serious, Amy and Emily are too serious'".

choosing the first single.

"It was between 'Galileo' and 'Joking'. Basically, we let the record company decide because they're the ones with control over promoting, and they have to feel they're behind all that stuff. In a way I wish that 'Joking' had been chosen because it's Amy's song. They tend to release my songs first 'cause they're a little more accessible to the mainstream. But Amy's song is a very rocking, joking, accessible song; it would have been nice to have one of hers be the first choice. But in the end, we don't really think of ourselves as a singles band. We don't think about emphasis tracks, that's up to them to decide."

success.

"I think if we had been plucked straight out of our nights when we made no money and had to drive four hours and turn around and get back at 7 in the morning, plucked out of that and placed right into this situation that we wouldn't have been able to adjust. But life has a way of letting you work things out."

"I think it's just something where you get in the mindset where you know what you have to do and you just do it. I think you adjust to each step of your life naturally, and this has been a natural progression."

"I can say when we first got signed I was really scared. I remember there were many nights when I cried, afraid that my life was going to totally change and I suppose in some ways it has, but I've been able to adjust and so has Amy. And there are just so many blessings that go along with what we do and in the fact that we can make a living playing music. It's just a luxury."

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\curvearrowright = Hammer-on \llcorner = Strum these notes together \uparrow = Strum up (towards your head)

\downarrow = STRUM DOWN (Away from your head) Unless otherwise indicated, all strumming should be down.

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* Basic lead intro -

** Lead solo - AFTER you play * ONCE! (Listen to the song you'll get it.)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hey! Let me say it feels great to communicate with fellow Go-Heads! I've just been introduced to this fine publication by my friend and jammin' buddy, Karin D. (you may have already read one of her articles).

Anyways, now that there's a guitar section, and since about all I play is Indigo's, I thought I would contribute my interpretation of 'Hand Me Downs', and help out Lori in Buffalo!

Let's face it, tho . . . Emily does not make things easy. The woman is awesome. But I try to get as close to the original song as possible, let me know what you think.

As far as my musical background, I've been playing close to 14 years. The Indigo's were discovered by me about 3 years ago, and like Carolyn, my life hasn't been quite the same since. After listening to the Kingston Trio, Simon & Garfunkel, Heart, etc . . . I FINALLY discovered a group who could play what I'd been wanting to hear! TOO COOL!

I'll be sending my version of 'Pushing the Needle' in the future. Enjoy 'Hand Me Downs'! Like Amy says "Learn the basics, then close the book and sing em however you want. Music is sacred, life is sacred, and fun is sacred . . . everything is sacred. So sing, sing, sing and be yourself!"

See ya -

Shawna Thornton
21407 111th Ave. Ct. E.
Graham, Washington 98338
(206) 847-9499

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED: Allman Bros/Indigo Girls Radio and Records CD
Karin Dalesky 4710 79th Ave. Ct. W., Tacoma, Washington
98466. (206) 564-5502 Anytime!

EXTRAS: Three "Nomads*Indians*Saints" posters, one brown
promo CD "Rites of Passage", one promo only "Rites of
Passage" CD (picture disc) in tri-fold cover and one
"Hammer and a Nail" promo CD single. Will trade for any
Indigo Girl obscurities, tapes, etc. Still seeking out
the EP (try to reasonable if one can be located!)
also desperately need audio or video of Portland, Oregon
show at Oaks Amusement Park on 8/21/92 ...thanks for
everyone's help!!!! Karin Dalesky 4710 79th Ave. Ct. W.
Tacoma, Washington 98466. (206) 564-5502 Anytime!

WANTED: Allman Bros/Indigo Girls Radio and
Records CD. Ian Cate, One Garland Row, White River
Junction, Vermont 05001 (802) 296-2678.

WANTED: "Joking" promo CD. Carolyn Spidle PO Box 940643
Plano, Texas 75094. (214) 424-1591.

THE BACK PAGE

Hi! I hope everybody is doing great. I would like to welcome all the new subscribers, response to "Lifblood"'s add in Goldmine has been great. Believe it our not this newsletter is now traveling as far as Germany.

Response to the get together in Atlanta next year has been great, it will definately happen. Now we just have to set a date and make arrangements. If you are interested in helping set this up or have a particular range of dates in mind drop me a line. Right now I am leaning toward spring or fall, as the humidity in Georgia can make camping in the summer interesting. I am also considering a trip to Atlanta around New Years Eve, if you are going to be in the area drop me a line.

I have received a couple of great tapes in the mail recently, one a sampler of Canadian artists and the other a group called "Insane Jane" from Atlanta. If you know of a group that the rest of us should hear, write up an article on them and send it in. One thing I am sure of is there are a lot of great musicians out there that radio never seems to get around to "discovering". In mid-July one Dallas station finally began playing the Indigo Girls (the first station here that I have found), and now and then I have the pleasure of hearing "Galileo", "Let It Be Me", and "Joking" without having to pop the tape in.

If you are waiting for anything from me in the mail and do not receive it in the next week or so, please drop me a letter to remind me. My father died the end of August and needless to say I did not work on Indigo stuff for awhile there. I have been working hard the last week or so and think I am just about caught back up, but would not be suprised to find I had overlooked something. Thanks for your patience.

Thanks again for your support of "Lifblood", be well and I'll talk with you soon -

CAROL :)

FROM THE ARCHIEVES

Published in the New York Times, August 7, 1989, the article below is one of the most famous ones ever written about Amy and Emily. They made references to it at many shows and during many interviews in late 1989 and early 1990. Although most Go-heads do not agree with it's premise, it's historical significance can not be denied.

Review/Pop

2 With Much to Tell

Earnest pretentiousness has new standard-bearers — the Indigo Girls, Emily Saliers and Amy Ray, who performed on Thursday night at Town Hall. Their music revives the strummed acoustic guitars and close harmonies of early-1970's arty confessional songwriters, and their lyrics push obscurity and preciousness toward hyperbole.

Still the Indigo Girls are currently a success on the college circuit. Their opening song on Thursday, Ms. Saliers's "Closer to Fine," drew a cheer with a line about being "free" at graduation.

The two Indigo Girls, from Atlanta, both play acoustic guitars and sing in tremulous, breathy altos. They can harmonize to gorgeous effect; their unaccompanied version of Paul Simon's "American Tune" sounded complete with just two voices.

Each Indigo Girl has a slightly different style of pretension. Ms. Saliers

is the more verbose songwriter, capable of such phrases as "while these moments are still called today"; Ms. Ray, whose songs are a little terser, sings every line with exaggerated ardency and performs with stagy self-congratulatory gestures. It's hard to tell which one thought Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower" could be improved with the additional verses they sang on Thursday.

What draws listeners, apparently, is not just the folksy sound of the music with its warming harmonies, but also the songs' promise of a healing spirituality. The lyrics are full of biblical imagery, and when songs can be deciphered, they often allude (like U2's lyrics) to a search for something to believe in, which may or may not be Christianity. Yet atop what may be heartfelt beliefs, there's a nearly impenetrable layer of flowery bad poetry.

JON PARELES