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 INTERVIEW WITH PEOPLE WE KINDA LIKE
 BY SAM A. MARSHALL

The Eve of Over The Rhine

Everybody's doing it—even *Everybody's News*. That is, plugging Over the Rhine and its soon-to-be-released recording, *eve*.

Since early August, the local media have been trumpeting OTR as the area's potential NBT (Next Big Thing.) That's because the group's first full-fledged recording for the national label, I.R.S. Records, will be released next Tuesday, Aug. 23.

Various local alternative radio programs and stations have been working an advance single from *eve* and revisiting a short list of tunes from the group's previous recordings.



OVER THE RHINE (FROM L TO R) KARIN BERGQUIST, LINFORD DETWEILER, BRIAN KELLEY AND RIC HORDINSKI. PHOTO BY MICHAEL WILSON.

amalgam of acoustic-based folk/pop/art rock. These members simply see this phase as an extension of themselves.

For fans of the group's warm and lushly romantic second

album, *Patience*, the pronounced edge may be initially disorienting, while for followers of OTR's live shows it will be quite familiar—and easy to embrace.

"I'm a firm believer in first takes," she said, admitting that some songs did require a second or third take. "It's a lot easier on us and our sanity, believe me."

"This attitude makes [eve] closer to our first album ('Til We Have Faces)," she added. "But when we did that one, we were nervous about letting the imperfections get out. Now, we're much more ready to embrace the flaws."

Kelley said that the group, which is keen on depth and dynamics, still likes to work with the spaces

in its songs. He noted that while he and guitarist Ric ("c" as in "cello") Hordinski are much more out front this time, they are all working together more fluidly, filling in holes and smoothing out rough spots.

rated very naturally, much more than before.

"On one of the tracks, called 'Melancholy Room,'" she continued, "Ric wrote the melody for the chorus, and I wrote the melody for the verse and pre-chorus."

Bergquist said they had been playing a stronger live version of the song for some time. But, she added, when she and Hordinski put down the vocal with acoustic guitar in the studio, "something very different and magical happened."

Collaborating with the two co-engineers, Shoemaker and Gene Andrusco, also helped the group to realize its vision more fully, Bergquist said.

Trina is very knowledgeable and passionate about music, and she's famous for throwing up mikes and getting the live take on the first shot," she said.

his opinion, he always answers honestly. That's a great help."

An added treat on the CD version of *eve* is not just the bonus hidden track, "Both-ered." It's also the session player who sat in on the song, Cincinnati's cutting-edge jazz bassist/composer, Chris Dahlgren.

"Linford and Karin invited me up to Massachusetts, and I was happy to find them open to letting me do what I wanted," said the now-New-York-based bassist in a phone interview from Colorado.

"I love the sound of [upright] bass with a female voice, especially one such as Karin's," Dahlgren continued. "She uses a lot of airy, back-of-throat sounds that work well with bass. Working from a simple chord chart, I tuned into the sound of her voice and set up a vibe, and her vocals came through very simple, pure and crystalline."

And that seems to be the group's musical mission: to keep everything simple, but always genuine and engaging.

"Our music is constantly changing," Bergquist said, noting the group's desire to achieve a distinctive style. "Whatever happens and gets documented will always be a true representation of what we are."

In spite of some understandable jitters, the group does seem to be "happy" with itself, and Kelley said it hopes to be even happier. "The airplay we've been getting with 'Happy...' is cool because it's our first official single," he said with a glimmer in his voice. "We hope to be driving somewhere on tour soon and catch it on the radio."

Over the Rhine's free "Eve of eve" concert will take place in Eden Park on Monday, Aug. 22, at 8 p.m. Also, there will be an "after-release" party at Kaldi's Coffee House and Bookstore, 1204 Main St. ••

Truth be told, there was a time, not so many years ago, when *EN* was not jumping on the band's wagon but actually helping to build the wagon with its coverage of the now-five-year-old group's exciting early shows and first two recordings.

In *EN*'s annual "Year in Music" issue for 1991, Over the Rhine was named "Band of the Year." The following year, *EN* picked OTR as "Best Folk/Pop Group." No brag about it: You read it here first.

Now you're reading it here again. The "buzz" about the new release is strong, especially if you've heard any of the newer material in concert in recent months or caught the single, "Happy with Myself?" on local alternative radio.

The group will mark the release of *eve* with a free concert in Eden Park on Aug. 22.

"To me, the word 'eve' means several things: anticipation, being on the edge, the coming of night," said drummer/percussionist Brian Kelley in a recent phone interview.

"Personally, I relate it to what we're going through at the moment. We're at a possible turning point in our careers. So of course we're wondering, worried, and excited."

Interestingly, the new album finds the electro/acoustic modern rock group not only being plugged but also getting plugged in—and just when it seems fashionable for electric groups to go the other way!

But according to Kelley and vocalist Karin Bergquist, OTR doesn't forsake its trademark

album, *Patience*, the pronounced edge may be initially disorienting, while for followers of OTR's live shows it will be quite familiar—and easy to embrace.

"The 'new' sound is not new to us. We've been living and working with it for quite awhile," said Kelley, describing the group's evolution in the three years since the recording of *Patience*. "It's more what we are than we've gotten down on tape before."

Bearing this out, WVXU radio programmer, Mike Boberg, recalled his own differing impressions of "Happy..." from a live show that preceded the single.

"When I saw the group at the Emery (Theatre) show this year, the song was pretty rockin'. But their shows are like that, so it didn't seem unusual," said Boberg who oversees WVXU's nightly alternative rock show, "Nightwaves."

"Then, when the station got the promo copy," he continued, "it seemed to jump out more. I like the fact that it kicks but still has a laid-back feel. Besides, [Karin's] vocals work on just about everything."

In a later phone conversation, Bergquist added another perspective. "We're able to explore a wider range of emotions," she said of this new edge, "by not suppressing some of the 'growling demons' in ourselves and letting those come out in the lyrics and music."

However, as Bergquist noted, one demon OTR has

gladly let go of is an obsession for perfection.

Notably, one of the two co-engineers was a woman, Kingsway's house engineer, Trina Shoemaker. Also, Bergquist wrote lyrics or music for eight of the 12 songs this time, expanding on the humanistic vision of OTR's principal songwriter, bassist/keyboardist Linford Detweiler.

"I really shouldered my way in there among all those boys," she says, laughing mischievously. "But it wasn't really competitive at all. We collabor-

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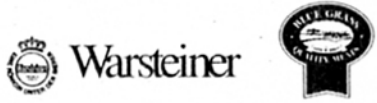
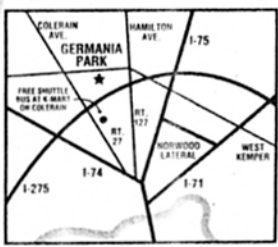
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