

Capturing the moment And also the music

Felix Obelix aims to create snapshot of today's Chapel Hill

BY JAMIE WILLIAMS
DIVERSIONS EDITOR

America's had a big week. No matter your personal politics, there's really no disputing the magnitude of what transpired. Chapel Hill musician Wendy Spitzer understands that as well as anyone, but instead of opting to discuss with friends over coffee, she has instead decided to involve the entire Chapel Hill community in what essentially amounts to a huge class portrait.

Hoping to capture the temper of the times, Spitzer has organized what must be the most ambitious concert corresponding with the release of a debut EP in recent memory. In addition to tunes from her band Felix Obelix, Midtown Dickens and Billy Sugarfix, attendees are encouraged to bring an item to contribute to a time capsule which will be held at the historic Horace Williams House for 50 years.

"I think now is the perfect time for something like this," Spitzer said. "It's three days after the inauguration and change is in the air."

Spitzer said she came to the idea for the event after considering the themes of Felix Obelix's debut disc.

"All the songs I wrote seem to center on the theme of a misremembered past," she said. "I really wanted the show to center on that. When people are thinking of what they will bring, I'm hoping that they will be in the frame of mind."

If the prospect of picking one item to represent your current situation in life seems daunting, Spitzer understands your concerns, saying that she's heard from plenty of friends who are concerned about what to bring. Spitzer, for one, seems to be taking a practical approach, saying that among other things, she will include a DVD player.

That soon-to-be-outdated bit of technology will be used by future Chapel Hill residents to view videos made by concert attendees.

Carrboro's Minnow Media will bring a video booth where people can present a more tangible, less material representation of Chapel Hill in 2009 by interviewing themselves in the booth.

"I think the video booth is going to be a cool way for people in the future to identify with people of the past. To really see them," she said.

To help with the event, Spitzer has received a grant from the Orange County Arts Commission and support from the Chapel Hill Preservation Society.

Ernest Dollar of the Preservation Society said that the event fits their mission perfectly.

"We thought it was a natural partnership," Dollar said. "Our mission is to preserve Chapel Hill's character, and this sort of snapshot is a perfect way for people to take stock of the present."

With that said, Dollar, a historian and steward of Chapel Hill's culture, said he still isn't sure what he's going to include in the time capsule.

"In 50 years when people open this, it will be like they are climbing back into our heads," Dollar said. "It's a lot to think about, but suspect there will be a lot of Obama stuff."

The timing of the show only three days after President Obama's inauguration was mostly a coincidence, said Spitzer, who has been planning this event for close to six months. She added that a renewed sense of optimism and reflection plays perfectly into the theme of the evening.

With all that's going on, it might be easy to forget that there will actually be music played. But Spitzer certainly hasn't, noting that her nerves have been steadily building as the show approaches.

"This is my first time fronting a band," Spitzer said, although some may remember her from her time with Chapel Hill's Eyes to Space.

"I've been putting this band together for about a year and a half. I wanted to do this in a big way, so now I guess the pressure's on."

If Spitzer is feeling some degree of pressure, she's doing nothing to keep as many people as possible from seeing her perform.

Operating on the logic that in order to create a true representation of the community, you have to include as much of that community as possible, Spitzer has taken every conceivable step to make sure that the event is as inclusive as possible.

"I made sure it would be all ages, I put up like 25 fliers in Spanish, I hope people will come and bring their families," Spitzer said.

"I really want this community building element to come together, and if I can sell out the run of 60 EPs, that would be pretty awesome too."

Contact the Diversions Editor
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What: Time Capsule Party/Felix Obelix EP Release Show
with performances by Midtown Dickens and Billy Sugarfix

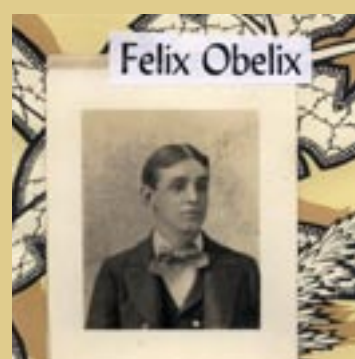
When: Friday at 8 p.m.

Where: The ArtsCenter — 300G E Main St., Carrboro

Cost: \$3 (no advance tickets); all ages; alcohol for purchase

What to bring: Items for time capsule to be opened in 2059

CD REVIEW: FELIX OBELIX EP



The self-titled debut from Felix Obelix starts slowly, with a lonely horn rising among flourishes from a vibraphone. And that's the calmest moment of the record. After the levee breaks, Wendy Spitzer's voice takes the lead, soaring above the ornately orchestral arrangements of brass and woodwinds as well as drums and accordion.

It's a record that has more depth and complexities housed within its four tracks than many pack into a full-length. It certainly rewards close attention and repeated listens with instrumental flourishes often hiding just below the surface.

In the mold of Felix Obelix's goals with its EP release party, the EP itself was a community effort, bringing together an incredible amount of musicians to create these songs, which it seems have been allowed to grow and flesh themselves out, both in Spitzer's mind and through the process of recording.

The songs move with speed and energy, rising and falling on the power of Spitzer's vocals. It's certainly a record of little joys and big shifts, complexities and obvious attention to details.

It will draw you in, and the attraction only gets stronger with repeat listens. -Jamie Williams



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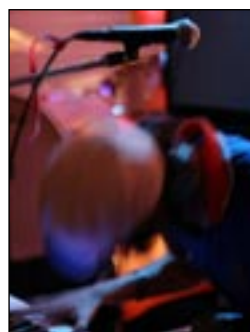
Ornate arrangements give way to epic vocals on Felix Obelix's self-titled debut EP.

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NEW RELEASES Dive lists new CDs of interest hitting the shelves this week.

CONCERT PHOTOS Check out more pictures from Harmute's CD release.

DIVEBLOG Stay tuned as we get into the swing of a new semester and more shows.



personalities

LOVE LANGUAGE

Raleigh's Love Language describes its rapid rise, which has led to an East Coast tour supporting The Rosebuds.

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DAILY ROUTINE

Dive examines Animal Collective's most pop album to date, a sweet reflection on summertime and fatherhood.

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DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Dive examines "Revolutionary Road," citing a poor script and Kate Winslet's overacting as flaws of the film.

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Q&A

YOU CAN COME HOME

David Karsten Daniels chats with Dive before the now Oregon resident plays a homecoming show this weekend.

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