

Indigo Girls return to The Orange Peel

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When asked to describe the music of The Indigo Girls, singer-songwriter Emily Saliers simply says "heart-felt."

Returning to Asheville Sept. 17, The Indigo Girls are scheduled to perform at The Orange Peel Social Aid and Pleasure Club.

"We're looking forward to coming back to Asheville," Saliers said. "We love Asheville. We've played there many times before, and it feels like coming home."

The Indigo Girls consists of long-time musical partners Emily Saliers, 46, and Amy Ray, 45. The pair began their music ventures together during their high-school days in Atlanta, 30 years ago, according to Saliers.

"Amy, her style is little more rock-it's a little more, for lack of a better word, aggressive. Mine is more sort of pop and groove influenced musically," Saliers said.

Saliers considers Ray's background of rural living to be more reflected in her musical style and lyrical content, while Saliers herself admits to pondering more philosophical and relationship questions when composing songs.

"For whatever reason, when we bring our songs to the table, she writes hers and I write mine. We're able to arrange them together, and that's what makes them Indigo Girls songs in the end," Saliers said.

Behind Saliers' earlier musical influences are Joni Mitchell and Stevie Wonder. Ray's include more post-punk artists, such as Patti Smith and The Clash.

"We have very, very different influences and sensibilities," she said. "When we



Photo courtesy of Matt Odom

The Indigo Girls will play at The Orange Peel on Sept. 17.

first started out, she held the rhythm down as a very strong strummer. I was more like the acoustic kicker. I have a higher voice and she has a lower voice."

Performing throughout the years as a

duo, as well as with a touring band, The Indigo Girls will deliver the more intimate acoustic experience of songs from the latest album, "Poseidon and the Bitter Bug," to Asheville fans.

"Our concerts are just kind of joyous experiences because everybody's really connected to the music," she said. "So, we hope that that continues – that we'll be able to focus on the new material, but also play a bunch of songs from our discography and sort of mix it up."

Grateful to keep fans over such an extensive musical career, Saliers says The Indigo Girls have maintained the "bar band" mentality where fans can associate their own lives with the lyrics.

"We play the old sing-a-long favorites and then we play some obscure ones that we just feel like playing," Saliers said. "It's sort of a smattering of songs from our past to our present. We make a new set list every night."

The Grammy-award winning duo has seen many changes throughout their extensive career in the music industry including fan base and label recognition.

"I would say that when we first started as a bar band we were very much supported by the women's community, the queer community, and then over the years the audience has expanded to be much more diverse," Saliers said. "We've been around so long now that our first generation of fans has kids and now the kids are coming to the shows, so that's awesome."

The Indigo Girls offer fans a new dynamic with "Poseidon and the Bitter Bug." The album consists of two CDs, one with the acoustic versions of songs, the other with the accompaniment of a band.

"It's been received very well. The record came out in the spring, and I personally feel that each CD has its own identity," Saliers noted. "Listening to the

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that caters to the indie rock, perhaps avant-garde, experimental vein.

"We tend to be a little psychedelic. There are some heavier bands, but it doesn't delve into heavy metal and you won't hear any screaming," he said. "It's very instrumentally focused, and we have a lot of live-performance bands."

It is difficult to keep up with the evolution of experimental music genres, now including psychedelic-noise prog rock and angular bands, the second characterized by more stop and go, dynamic compositions that change tempo any second, according to Meier.

"I think new genres are created every day," he said.

Gray Young from Raleigh keeps it simple and describes their sound as rock music. Their songwriting process is about letting the music lead and just following as

the musicians, according to guitarist and singer Chas McKeown.

"We go to a room and we just start playing. It's a very organic process," said McKeown, 31. "If something strikes all three of us, then we'll usually keep playing it and see if anything else comes from it."

Goodbye, Titan, another band from Raleigh, said their music sounds like ghosts in a cave, rain overflowing from the gutters and the final stand of men against orcs.

"The most obvious influences on our band are our post-rock and prog-rock forefathers," guitarist Allen Palmer said. "We're constantly getting compared to Explosions in the Sky and Sigur Ros, even though I think our music sounds only slightly like theirs."

The band often writes songs imagining they are a movie score, helping them decide where the song or film should go next,

according to the band.

"We try to have our songs hit on several themes, sort of a reflection of actual human emotion," Palmer said. "Maybe we in the band all just have A.D.D., but I don't really think people feel the same way for more than a few minutes at a time."

Goodbye, Titan, Gray Young and The White Cascade are three bands from Raleigh set to perform at Drone Valley, representing the concentrated indie-rock scene in the Triangle.

Their presence at the festival will attract a lot more out-of-town attendees, according to Andy Meier.

"I'm happy to see that a lot of people have 'RSVPed' from as far as Chapel Hill, Raleigh-Durham and even the east side of the state," he said.

According to the bands, the most exciting thing about the festival is the opportu-

nity to play and hear great music and meet new people, all of which play a central role in the festival according to Meier.

"Everybody just gets together and has a good time playing their hearts out," Meier said.

Meier said the music scene in Asheville is very tight-knit, and he hopes Drone Valley avoids that exclusive mentality.

"It is hard to break into the scene, so we're making it a regional festival instead of just bands from Asheville or Buncombe County," he said.

"We have a band coming from as far as Tampa and another band from mid-Michigan. Most of the inspiration behind it is just networking more than anything else."

For more Drone Valley '09 information, please visit www.myspace.com/dronevalley