

## G-Side surprises listeners

**Beckett Bathanti**

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### Album Review

In a recent article in Spin, the two emcees who form the criminally underrated Huntsville, Ala., rap duo G-Side sound tired. Tired of receiving blog and local love, but being unable to generate sales outside of Alabama. Tired of a perpetual grind in a broke, static city, pouring their heart and soul into intelligent, street-smart music that continues to fall on the deaf ears of the hip-hop community.

Mali Boi and CP make up the production team Block Beattaz that has handled most of the production on *Island* and G-Side's first album of 2011, January's *One: The Cohesive*.

Where *One: The Cohesive* faltered, with too many features and a reliance on overly airy beats and lackluster R&B hooks, *Island* excels.

If Lex Luger's signature accelerating synth chime is like a spaceship starting up before crash-landing in the middle of the trap, the swooshing "Slow Motion Sounds" tag the mark of the Block Beattaz that opens up *Island* is the sound of a spaceship taking full flight and going into orbit for the length of the album.

Initially, it was strange to hear the clear, ringing Maybach Music drop over an eerie, Block Beattaz beat a minute into "Gettin It." However, it doesn't take long to realize that Ohio rapper Stalley, Rick Ross' newest signee, has a lot more in common with the world-weary, cautious confidence of G-Side than the bellowing braggadocio of the Maybach Music founder.

Riding around Asheville, listening to *Island* with a friend of mine, she paused af-

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# Beirut visits Asheville for the first time

**Anne Louise Bouchard**

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Beirut, a band based out of New Mexico, makes their first appearance in Asheville next week.

"I was really excited to hear that Beirut was coming to Asheville," said **Amelia Capaforte, a junior at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College**. "The closest they have ever come is Greensboro, so this is a really big deal."

The band, led by singer Zach Condon, started in 2006.

"I started listening to them my senior year of high school," said **Nambi Ndugga, a French student at UNC Asheville**. "I'm looking forward to getting to see them live."

The band is on tour promoting their latest album *The Rip Tide*, released this past August.

"All of Beirut's albums have been really impressive," said **Zach Monard, a classical guitar student at UNCA**. "*The Rip Tide* is really sticking out to me."

The junior said it is hard to be-



Photo courtesy of Beirut

Natives of New Mexico, Beirut will perform in Asheville for the first time next Monday. Beginning in 2006, Beirut creates music influenced by many different styles of international music.

lieve how close the members of the band are to his age.

"The lead singer was born in 1986 which makes him barely older than I am," said Monard. "As a music major, I think it's an inspiration. They have already released so much music."

Beirut's world influence makes them unique, Ndugga said.

"You can hear a Brazilian influence," she said. "They sound very international."

Monard said he agrees with Ndugga.

"They do sound very worldly, yet they are from New Mexico," he said. "Their first show was in the UK and since then, they have toured all over Europe."

Capaforte said she thinks the

band will put on a good show.

"I've seen some YouTube videos of them and I saw them on David Letterman," said the 20-year-old. "I think the show at The Orange Peel is going to be really beautiful."

Beirut, known for such hits as *Elephant Gun* and *Nantes*, will play at The Orange Peel next Monday.

## Indigo Girl Amy Ray performs solo show at Grey Eagle

**Auburn Petty**

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After being part of the Grammy-winning Indigo Girls since high school, **Amy Ray** started writing and recording material for a solo project in 2000, she said.

"I had some music that I'd written that didn't really fit in with what the Indigo Girls were doing. I realized at that point I could play with other bands that I was friends with and collaborate and kind of do punk and rock music," Ray said. "It was just like a hobby, just for fun."

Ray's solo music is quite different from the music that made The Indigo Girls famous.

"It's a different collaboration. My solo stuff tends to be influenced really heavily by punk rock and rock music, so it's much more electric," Ray said. "The players I play with have stylistically come from that background."

However, The Indigo Girls are known for their up-front harmonies and a more acoustic, folksy sound.

"With Emily, a harmony is like very up front, very in-your-face harmony," Ray

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said. "It's equal. It's like a real duo. We're harmonizing in kind of like a compromise. Call-and-answer kind of guitar parts are really important."

Ray said writing for her solo project is a lot different than writing for The Indigo Girls.

"My solo writing is a little more graphic and edgy, and maybe intimate," Ray said.

In the folk-rock duo, Emily Sailors and Ray each write their own songs independently.

"They become part of both of us, so there's less of that kind of close, kind of intimate, graphic kind of writing," Ray said.

It's not a surprise to hear that fans of the folk-rock duo are not the biggest fans of Ray's electric, punk-influenced solo music.

Despite this, Ray's solo albums still project some of the same vibes as an Indigo Girls' album. A listener would find it easy to identify the singer as Ray in both an Indigo Girls' track and a solo track.

Ray has a very distinct voice, and her solo music has a unique sound.

Ray said her side project started upon collaborating with the Butchies.

"A lot of the bands I worked with were on the rock or punk side of things, and I became friends with a lot of — I was a fan of — a lot of musicians that were playing a lot of different music," she said.

This relationship spawned three studio albums and a live album, with another to come.

"I had enough music to make a record, so I decided to go ahead and start making records and put them out on my own label," Ray said. "It just kept going well, so I just kept doing it. Every couple years, I go on tour by myself for a while."

Ray will perform at Asheville's The Grey Eagle on Dec. 9 as part of her solo tour.

Although Ray's solo project does not draw as much of an audience as The Indigo Girls, she said she still finds the experience fulfilling.

"I've just found that it really gives me a way to express a completely different side of what I do," she said.