



## Chiemi's Corner

## Music Reviews & Events

by Chiemi

What's up and groundbreaking on the indie production scene? 7not Records, that's what. The independent record label from Somerville and its enterprising leader have a simple founding principal: "support and develop artists through a mutually beneficial business model...[so that]the proceeds go back to making more music."

### 7not is Born

Jason Kitayama, a musician who writes his own originals (also produced on the label), said the idea for his organization came about one February morning in 2004. He was heading to work and walked down the stairs at Davis Square T station to come upon a busker. Kitayama took off his headphones and heard some lovely poetry sung soft and slow over simple, clean acoustic guitar. He was moved. The train was delayed and Kitayama had the pleasure of listening to another song. As he listened Kitayama said he thought to himself -- "This girl is pretty talented -- good writing, voice, playing... why is she playing the trains?" He dropped \$10 into her case, and picked up her CD. Kitayama listened to the disk and the seed that eventually bore

### 7not was born

"There must be more of her out there -- enormously talented musicians looking for an in -- a way to be heard, and realized that this could be my contribu-

tion: 'move art' - help the buskers in the world be heard, and get to where they want to be... the idea was born," he said.

### 7not artists

Somerville artists Tom Bianchi, Teresa Storch and Danielle Miraglia are the first generation of talent on the label. Miraglia hosts and performs at a singer-songwriter workshop Sunday nights at the Davis Square bar The Burren, and also has a CD, "Nothing Romantic." In February 2006, 7not helped make possible The Ryan Montbleau Band's first studio release, "One Fine Color" at the Somerville Theater.

Also at the Theatre, 7not artist Bianchi was invited to join the Funny Singer/Songwriter's festival there, kicking it off for Don White with his usual panache. Beyond that show, 7not plans to get Bianchi into the studio for a follow-up to Winchentucky.

7not is also working on getting The Tall Palm into the studio this year for their first full length CD described by Kitayama as "Rhythm, funky, hard hitting bass lines - a must see." The Tall Palm plays at the Skellig in Waltham every Wednesday night. Other projects include, "Primary Others" -- a follow-up to their debut: "The Highlands Formula."

Kitayama describes finding his artists as a "chase." He likens it to the first day at a new school -- "I didn't know anyone, didn't

# On the way up at 7not



Jason Kitayama

know where to go, nothing." So he "started where it all began -- with that busker and her website."

Kitayama went to her site, and saw she was having a CD release show at the Burren. He said he went to the show, witnessed some major talent and was blown away by it. From there, he went to their shows, listened to their songs, met them and just threw the idea at them while it was still in its infancy. "These first artists, have helped me mold the idea of 7not from my morning coffee hobby to something that they can get value out of -- because after all it's about them," he said.

### 7not Founder on Music

Music for Kitayama has always been a love, though he didn't start playing/writing until college, becoming more serious about it over the last three years. Kitayama said, "I've always been listening to songs wondering the state someone was in when they

wrote a particular song, and I tried to transcribe my thoughts in this same manner." If there is anything Kitayama is learning from 7not -- "it's the passion that goes into good songwriting." He explains, "I listen to a song like 'Cry' (Danielle Miraglia), or 'We're All Here For a While' (Tom Bianchi) and I think we these are so much more than words over music, and I know I'm not the only one who feels this way. Then I turn on the radio (at least I used to), and hear that garbage that's out there and that -- this person is making music. And Tom, Danielle, Lisa are playing the trains? This is just wrong -- and why I want to help."

### The future of 7Not

Kitayama anticipates a bright future for 7not Records. He said the company expects to be involved in at least six more releases and a number of shows. "And, of course, we're always out there listening," he said.

"The key," said Kitayama "is to keep the scale of the label manageable to maintain the mission. These artists need hand on help, so what I am trying to build is a family, not a giant machine churning out disks. So 10 years, maybe I'll have a handful of people I trust, doing what we love -- listening to and promoting these talents to get them where they want to be. I think that would be ideal."