

Jahn Sood, Ezra Furman, The Harpoons, and Folk on Records



Chiemi's
Corner

MUSIC
REVIEWS
&
EVENTS

Furman and Sood had been grouped together in a Freshman orientation community service group. Sood gravitated to Furman because he had a guitar with him that week. Sood soon found out that he was a songwriter from Chicago and a Dylan fan. That night, happy to avoid more awkward ice-breaking activities the two Freshman traded songs and played together for the first time within three hours of meeting, getting to know each other in the way that was most comfortable.

Over the next year and a half, the two built both their friendship and musical relationship. Sood said, "We traded shows and songwriting tips, and played open mics together in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville and became our own little musical scene."

At time, Sood was living with another musician, flamenco guitarist, Amod Rajbhandari and had formed a band based on our musical collaboration called Moksha. Moksha was a Latin-Groove and Folk Blues fusion that mixed Sood's songwriting with Rajbhandari's well-developed technical ability on the guitar. The original line-up included bass player Job Mukkada and trumpeter player and percussionist, Ryan Coughlin. As the band got positive feedback from the Tufts community, Moksha started to perform regularly, especially at cultural events and fund raisers at school and nearby.

"As we were a group from extremely different musical and cultural backgrounds, we really



Ezra Furman works in the studio

songwriting input from bassist Job Mukkada and the addition of a drummer, Adam Abrutyn. These changes in the structure of the band caused a drastic change in the music. Sood said, "Beginning at Tufts' Octoberfest in October of 2005 we 'went electric.' Coincidentally, Ezra Furman, known at Tufts as a edgy Dylan-esque folk singer and to the band only as my friend opened the show."

At this point, Furman and Sood lived together and Sood was trying his hand as producer recording songs in their dorm room home studio. Sood said he was planning to put out an Ezra Furman album on his label Folk On Records, the name that Sood had used to release his 2005 solo project, "I Will Go."

Also during that Fall, Furman came on a mini-tour with Moksha opening several shows in Maine. It was during this time that Ezra began to develop a relationship with Job and Adam who would later become the bassist and drummer for the Harpoons and when they were first really introduced to his music.

Meanwhile, a couple of years earlier Furman played a solo show in Chicago at a place called Nevin's Live and the club manager at the time, Mitch Marlow gave him a card and said that he'd like to represent him. Furman, wary of the business side of music did not call him for more than a year, but just recently got back in touch with Marlow (also manager for the Redwalls, Capitol Records and former manager

though no shows were booked and Furman did not have a band.

Furman and Sood set the end of the Spring semester as a goal for completing the album and recruited Mukkada and Abrutyn to do a few Tufts shows as Ezra Furman and the Harpoons to see how the music would work with a rock and roll band. They played the first show February 2006 at Tufts' Hotung Cafe with the Harpoons opening the show on Moksha's bill.

Having recorded several songs that were acoustic sounding, emphasizing Furman's folk side, the band members decided that some songs needed to be on the album in order to complete the picture. They recruited engineer Dave Kant. Under less than ideal conditions, again recording in dorm rooms, this time spread out all over campus and on weekend nights over the course of a month, the musicians pieced together the remaining tracks of the debut Harpoons record, "Bear Beat Beat."

RECORDING AND THE SUMMER TOUR

With the plan to release the record on June 1 and a tour in its early stages of development the band finished up the semester and stayed at school for a week to mix the last of the recordings. When the project was finished, they parted ways for a couple weeks. Furman and Sood convinced the rest of the band to rearrange their Summer plans, and gambling on our word, they committed to go on the tour if

shows in 29 days ranging as far as St. Louis in the SW, Evanston, IL in the NW, Portland, ME in the NE and Philadelphia, PA in the SE was a huge success and an awesome experience," said Sood. "We set out in the name of the last stand of rock and roll, expecting to be broke and hungry when we returned and took on the country in a mini van, sleeping on friends floors and eating whatever the venues gave us for free."

Said Sood, "Now we have been offered a record deal and are negotiating the contract with Chicago Indie label, Minty Fresh Records and expect to rerecord the first album in January and build a tour schedule around our school calendar."

All of the band members will be Juniors at Tufts this year in diverse areas of study: Sood, Lead Guitar, International Relations, Comparative Religion Minor; Furman, Acoustic Guitar, Lead Vocals, English; Mukkada, Bass, Psych major, Pre-med; and Abrutyn, Drums, Economics.

FOLK ON RECORDS

Sood's radio show on Tufts' freeform radio station, WMFO 91.5 FM Medford, MA is called Folk On Records "On the Air." He said, "It is the radio embodiment of my record label concept, Folk On Records."

Folk On Records is not a record label in the traditional business sense. Said Sood, "It is not a money making entity, rather it is a cooperative of musicians and other people involved in music to

Wednesday, Sept. 13, Somerville resident and Tufts University student, Jahn Sood will play with his band, Ezra Furman and the Harpoons, at TT the Bear's in Central Square, Cambridge. Sood will also be performing solo with the Spelt Melk Jug Band at the Tufts Hotung Cafe on October 12. Both shows start at 9 p.m.

When he is not performing solo, Sood plays with his current band, Ezra Furman and the Harpoons. Ezra Furman is another Tufts student.



MEETING AND MUSIC WITH EZRA FURMAN

"On my eighteenth birthday, I left home. I'm a romantic and a Joseph Campbell fan, so I find that is a good place for a legend to begin. I've got to admit that I wasn't headed out onto the road to make my own way as the heroic journey would demand, but was on my way to college.

thought of ourselves as a microcosm of the diversity within Tufts and played music that represented that," said Sood.

The band returned from the Summer with fresh material. Sood had spent the summer playing shows in Portland, ME and absorbing the attitude of that scene, while Rajbhandari had spent the Summer studying

seems gentle, considerate and articulate. He told the News that he has been influenced by the late Hip-Hop artist Tupac Shakur, as well as Poe's dark po-

Sousa said he wrote the poems for his collection "Almost Home Free," in cemeteries in and around Somerville and Boston. He needed the graves to inspire

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We swap everything from songwriting tips to shows. I see music primarily as a method of communication and in creating Folk On Records seek to remind people that songwriters are sharing themselves through their music and to help them do that." As Sood has jumped deeper into the folk music scene in Boston and Portland, he said he realized that there are multitudes of incredible musicians who are unsigned and unheard. Sood said, "I started Folk On Records "On the Air" as a way to play these writer's work on the air right next to the works of their "discovered" and established counterparts." Also, in addition to playing recordings by the great artists of the Greater Boston area, Sood has begun to feature live guest performances on the show. Past performances include Dan Gonzalez, Jaded Mandolin, Ezra Furman, Justine McDonald of Talaria, Chris Eliot, Mary



In the WMFO studio

Ukelady, Dan Cloutier and Geoff Brown/w Mark Whittaker.

"Folk music is music for folks, by folks, about folks. It is any music that stabs at the core of its listeners, bends them until they break and forces them to realize that they are human too," said Sood.

THE CONCEPT ALBUM

"I'm working on a new solo proj-

ect...a concept album...based on Moby Dick, Heart of Darkness (Joseph Conrad), The Castle (Franz Kafka), On the Road (Jack Kerouac), Beloved (Toni Morrison), the Tempest, Pink Moon (Nick Drake) and others," said Sood. "It's about a journey, desire and the high and lows of humanity. I've been writing for a year and I'm recording the demos now."