

RED ROOSTER RELEASES DEBUT ALBUM, "PORCH SONGS"

They've been waiting a long time for this album.... The loyal fans in and around New York City, yes. But also the band. It was sometime around the spring of 2000 that they began sifting through recordings of their energetic live country and blues shows for jewels. But those recordings were lost. Take two: the studio approach, with a D8 recorder rigged up in Jay Erickson's bedroom. But after nine months of work, a hard drive crash wiped out the half-finished album.... So they started again. Porch Songs has been a long time coming.

Luckily, this is a band that takes things as they come. In 1998, as a three-piece living room jam band, the Rooster threw together a repertoire from old vinyl records and discount CDs--country, blues, folk, bluegrass--and got a friend to let them open up a Monday night open mic in Chelsea. A young loyal fan base of friends (the three had recently graduated from Princeton) took up the Rooster banner. Soon, they were playing Manhattan mainstays like the Elbow Room, Shine, Fez, and had settled into a four hour marathon Sunday slot at the Back Fence, on Bleecker street in Greenwich Village. The band changed here and there. Slowly and organically. Talents mixed and abilities grew, and more and more those four hours were filled with original songs.

These new songs made it even harder to answer the common question "what kind of band are you guys?" It was more complicated than "folk and blues," but rattling off Americana genres got awfully confusing. Maybe the best answer is "guitar, fiddle, banjo, bass, drums, kazoo, harmony." But that still doesn't solve the "where are you guys from?" problem. The answer is "Maine, South Carolina, Long Island, Manhattan, and Indiana." They usually just say "Brooklyn."

And in a way, that's the truth. Brooklyn is where the album came together--on Pacific Street, in that apartment, doors and windows closed, cigarettes burning, day and night, listening, recording, talking about it, doing it again. This album was made at home. And if they lived somewhere quieter, it probably would have been on the porch.

Think of Porch Songs as Red Rooster's slow-cooked casserole, brought to the pot luck dinner of Americana music.



BIOGRAPHIES

Miles Crawford didn't know drums weren't allowed in hootenannies. In an attempt to get attention, Miles started banging the sticks at the age of four, and has found himself over the years in ska bands and L.A. poetry slams. For real money, Miles performs in the New York City production of STOMP.

Matt Dellinger likes to sing songs. He kazooed the Star Spangled Banner for his fifth grade talent show in Indianapolis, Indiana, and all of the children laughed. Dellinger is a graduate of the New York City citizen pruner academy. He also likes to write and take photographs

Jay Erickson grew up in Manhattan (where lax enforcement allowed him to frequent blues bars from the age of 14) and moved "off-island" to Brooklyn after graduating from college. He plans on moving to the country someday (where residents are permitted to keep roosters).

Jamie Forrest is a musician, composer, and audio engineer. He has been playing bass since age 12, and mandolin since he was 16. He has performed in many groups in a wide variety of styles including hip-hop, folk, r&b, and jazz.

Jonathan Howe has recently moved to Cambridge, MA, where he lives with his girlfriend, dog, and cat. He works for Earthwatch Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to scientific research. He's a curious mixture of lover AND fighter.

Brian Keane grew up in Seneca, SC. After high school he moved North, where he discovered his love for country music and the Southern way of life. He enjoys playing with the other Roosters possibly even more than they enjoy playing with themselves.

Edward Anthony Shergalis grew up in the wilds of Darien, CT and played in the Shergalis family's Ishkabibel --a trio that specialized in Lithuanian string music. At the age of 18 he layed down his bow until he joined Red Rooster 6 years later. Dreams include someday playing electric violin through a distortion pedal with a heavy metal band. G is his favorite string to pizzicato- there is nothing really like a G-string played pizzicato.

Nat Zilkha, a lifelong fan of country blues and folk music, has been playing the guitar since he was 8 years old. He has played in several bands, and attended the Berklee School of Music in Boston.