

Music

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You smell nice and you're groovy and we both like foreign movies

My mother says you have that touch of class

Well I can see a shining future where we'll dialogue and nurture

But there's one last thing I feel I need to ask...

Do you take it in the ass?

Do you take it in the ass?

Cause you're beautiful and curvy

But unless you're kinda pervy

There's no way you and me are gonna last...

By John Crawford

Add to the above lyrics the sounds of bossa nova and you have the Wet Spots. Al-

though they've only been together as a musical unit for less than a year, the Vancouver duo of guitarist, vocalist and songwriter John Woods (Orchid Highway, Johnny Wisdom) and renowned poet/sex columnist Cass King have been busy taking their clever, well-written, jazzy cabaret songs about spanking, threesomes and orgies all over town. And with the release of their first album this weekend, they show no signs of stopping.

King and Woods met in February 2001 when T. Paul Ste. Marie double-booked them to feature on the same night at Thundering Word Heard, the weekly spoken word and music night at the Café Montmartre.

"It was one of those things that's almost out of a bad Harlequin Romance," reminisces Wisdom. "I wound up providing sitar accompaniment to Cass' tender and heartfelt poem about hot lesbian action."

They liked each other's work so made plans to collaborate on songs, but with few results.

"We didn't stop having sex long enough to actually collaborate on material like we had said we were going to, for about a year," explains King. "We had to move in together to

find the time to actually write some songs."

They started writing material sporadically as The Wet Spots last February and by July debuted at the Grow Show. Since September they've been extremely busy.

"At one point we had 17 gigs in four weeks—it was crazy," says King. The 'Spots performed everywhere from spoken-word and burlesque shows to very straight suburban venues, like Lafflines in New West. And they're happy to report that only after "six short months" they were able to pay their rent this month with proceeds from Wet Spots.

Musically, The Wet Spots combine the sounds of jazz and cabaret with the well-written kookiness of lounge.

XXX marks The Wet Spots

Vancouverites John Woods and Cass King: "We didn't stop having sex long enough to actually collaborate on material like we had said we were going to, for about a year."

"It's really fun to sing songs about sex... or sing things that people don't say or talk about. Or just sing it in this corny, over-the-top vaudeville musical style that people associate with stuff that's safe as milk," muses King.

Cass was involved with the '90s lounge scene with Blue Lizard as a publicist and MC, so her work has ties to the "exuberant idiocy" of Les Baxter, Henry Mancini and Juan Garcia Esquivel. "(Lounge is) kind of what we aspire to. It's going to be loopy, it's going to be out there... but we'd really like to try and keep (the element of) craft strong. It's really hard to talk about sex in an intelligent way. Because there's a lot of schlock out there."



What makes it work, says Wood, "is the fact that our stage persona is all about assuming that everybody does crazy outrageous stuff," he explains, as if everybody is as kinky as they are. King has had a strong interest in sex education, (first writing Organ Grinder, a weekly sex column for *Terminal City*, then becoming the retail manager of Womyns' Ware) and would like to "investigate some conversation between audience members and their partners."

But she refuses to be preachy and confrontational, like: "We're sex radicals. Let me tell you about gender politics and polyamory and, oh, barf... I don't need a lecture."

That's not entertainment, agrees Woods. "I like sneaking it under the radar. Like the song *Public Service Announcement* about all the stuff you shouldn't stick up your ass. 'Never stick a vacuum up your bum'.... The jokes are kinda hokey but then (Cass) goes into a part where (she's saying) 'don't improvise with what you've got around the house. Just get over the fact that you want to play with your bum and get the right tool for the job.' And make sure it's a silicone tool because you don't want to poison yourself with toxic crap that comes in things like softened PVC."

Says King: "It's our little educational moment but it's very tongue-in-cheek."

And people seem to be talking. They're planning a new page on their website called Things People Say to Us After the Show.

"Oh my God. Once you open your mouth and say, 'Hi, I'm a kinky bastard' everyone wants to say 'I'm a kinky bastard, too.' Everyone wants to share." For example, a drunken guy in New West once told them, "Now listen, I can take four fingers, but five is too much."

In December, The Wet Spots brought in producer Steven Drake of Odds fame, who not only played bass, vibes and ukulele but also helped them lyrically and with the arrangements.

"I cannot say enough about this guy," says Woods. The songs were finished, recorded (both live at Honey and in the studio), mixed, mastered and produced in a period of seven weeks, just in time for last month's Everything To Do With Sex Show (where they performed and did seminars as part of the Womyns' Ware booth). The result is the fabulously produced seven-song gem, *Ribbed For Pleasure*.

"Just for the record, we don't have more butt sex than anybody else in the universe," though their songs are obviously the result of their hard work. They're gearing up for their CD Launch and Pajama Party Saturday (Feb. 8) at Babylong Mansion, a beautiful old two-story boudoir in Gastown that is the home of Sweet Soul Designs and has been putting on events since the fall. The show will feature burlesque, DJs, puppetry as well as performances by the Wet Spots, from 9 p.m. 91 Powell @ Columbia. Surf www.wetspotsmusic.com for details.