

the SHEILA KIRSTEN HUGHES Band

BOOKING & INFO

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Sheila Kirsten Hughes Band is a member of the 2008-2010 Florida State Touring Roster and is a two-time recipient of the Artist Enhancement Grant from the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs.

REVIEW *the tampa tribune*



Listen Up!

Local bands put out CDs, too. Music Critic Curtis Ross reviews the latest releases from Tampa area artists. Pg. 18

Sheila Kirsten Hughes Band, *Perspectives*

"Hughes is an earnest singer-songwriter who should appeal to fans of Jewel and Sarah McLachlan. 'Perspectives' is an impressive recording thanks to glossy production, Hughes' dramatic vocals and some fine and subtle use of string arrangements."

—Curtis Ross, *The Tampa Tribune*

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well as one of its three guitarists. "In retrospect, if we'd had more time we would have spent more time on mixing and mastering. It's not happy with it but we want to do it a little bit differently next time."

"Secretary" doesn't capture the overwhelming wash of sound that makes Giddy-Up, Helicopter such an impressive live act. The trade-off is that the recording spotlights the band's songwriting. Conner lists Sleater-Kinney, Sonic Youth and The Jesus and Mary Chain as influences all the band members share, but says they really didn't have a particular sound in mind when they formed. Conner and guitarist Nicole

Schieff began writing songs together and met bassist Sandi Streppone over the Internet. They met guitarist Nikki Navarro and a now-departed drummer at downtown Tampa bar The Hubs. "We were at the drummer's house and it's like, 'Now we have to write a song,'" Conner recalls. "We just kind of started and played out that night at an open mike. We didn't really have time to think about what it would sound like."

"As it progressed we had influences we wanted to follow and sounds we wanted to get to," Conner says.

Conner met Leonard Cohen and Jason Molina from Sonjé. Ohio

is two current favorite lyricists. "I like lyrics that are kind of like stories but not overdone. Not folksy, just telling the base of a story that people can kind of relate to without having meaning shoved down their throats," Conner says.

"I don't like to explain the lyrics perfectly," Conner says. "Usually they relate to a couple of things I've grown through, or stories I've heard, but I like to leave them so people can go, 'This reminds me of the summer when I was 16.'"

Giddy-Up, Helicopter will spend its summer touring, playing as far away as Chicago, Boston and New York.

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SOUND BITES

Tampa area bands are making some noise. Here's a baker's dozen of local releases that are worth a spin.

Some of these artists have been Tampa area favorites for years. Some we'd never heard of until the CD landed in our mail bin. Regardless, they all represent the rich diversity of our local music scene on disc.

Curtis Ross

<p>Giddy-Up, Helicopter, I Am Secretary giddyuphelicopter.com</p> <p>It's rare when a band can establish so strong an identity on its first album that identifying its influences seems redundant. Giddy-Up, Helicopter does just that on "I Am Secretary." If the recording doesn't capture the group's live dynamics, it succeeds by showcasing the songwriting which are staggeringly good. One of the best albums — not local albums — of 2007.</p> <p>Go to TBO.com, Keyword: <i>Album</i>, to download MP3s from these and other local bands.</p>	<p>The Ditchflowers, Carried Away theditchflowers.com</p> <p>It will come as a shock to anybody so one familiar with the past work of Ed Wiley (Ma for Electric) or Brian Merrill (Shorey Pink) that the duo's album is shiny, perfect-blue-sky pop. So what? Surprises are overrated. Fans of Ed's country and '90s rock may want to have a fitting cough nearby.</p>	<p>The Urbane Cowboys, Only Truth Tangle theurbancowboys.com</p> <p>Twang, thunder and cranked-up country riff from these Tampa cowboys, with a cover of The Frisco Band's dance favorite "Wine of Meditation," thrown in for good measure. The righteous rough-and-ready production captures the Cowboys at their snaky-but-on-SF-FBR-right-fer.</p>	<p>I Green Windows, Red Dove reddovepub.com</p> <p>Opening track "Red Dove Blues," not to mention Robert Johnson and Rolling Stones tunes among the originals, suggest this is a local first burner. Todd Graber's blues-rock guitar, kept listening, though, and encouraging, country-jazz, captures the bluesy lean chords. The performance of Graber, singer Jo Smith, banjoist Matt Dawson and drummer Jeff Henry are spot-on regardless of the genre.</p>	<p>Offshore Riot, Offshore Riot offshoreriot.com</p> <p>With its mix of ska, dub punk and hip-hop, Offshore Riot draws inevitable comparisons to Sublime. Titles such as "The Bong Song" don't hurt either. A listen to cuts such as the instrumental "Hater," though, confirms Offshore Riot is capable of establishing an identity all its own.</p>	<p>Denise Moore, Nothing Standard denisemoore.com</p> <p>Moore sets herself an unenviable task here, putting her own spin on well-worn favorites such as "I Look Like" and "Come Rain or Come Shine." That she does so is a testament to her good taste, fine voice and her band. Then, <i>Senae</i>, which draws from the finest musicians in the Tampa area. A twirling treat.</p>	<p>Lorna Brucewell, Flowers on the Chain lornabrucewell.com</p> <p>The influence of Melissa Etheridge and Ani DiFran was obvious on Brucewell's earliest work, but on her previous album, "God Forbid," and especially this new one, she's moved past those influences and into her own territory. "Flowers" is Brucewell's toughest, most provocative and most satisfying release yet.</p>	<p>Vance Borland, Live in Paradise vanceborland.com</p> <p>Borland's voice reaches frequencies most often associated with Leonard Cohen and there's a consistency to much of what he sings here (except for the 1922 vintage "When Did You Leave Home," which is Brucewell all the way). Thoughtful lyrics also help give an air of drama to Borland's songs.</p>	<p>Charlie Souza, Live in Paradise charliesouza.com</p> <p>Souza was the bassist for Tampa's '90s. He greets The Tropics and logged some time with a young Tom Petty as well. His new album is a pleasant mix of pop and rock with some soul flourishes. opener "Carry Me Back" is a natural for local classic rockers and the album also includes an update of "The Tropics" "Black Jacket Woman."</p>	<p>Betty's Not a Vitamin, Betty's Not a Vitamin bettysonotavitamin.com</p> <p>Regulars around Tampa in the '90s, Betty's Not a Vitamin has resented to get constantly and record this disc of shamelessly catchy pop-rock.</p> <p>Hughes is an earnest singer-songwriter who should appeal to fans of Jewel and Sarah McLachlan. "Perspectives" is an impressive recording thanks to glossy production, Hughes' dramatic vocals and some fine and subtle use of string arrangements.</p> <p>"Rock" is sweet, simple but smart pop.</p>	<p>Stone Marmot, Rock - for People Who Don't Dig Rock stonemarmot.com</p> <p>Stone Marmot belongs to the proud tradition of rock rock — Buddy Holly, The Everly Brothers. Weaver's performances who love the big beat but have given up trying to look elegantly wasted. "Rock" is sweet, simple but smart pop.</p>	<p>Scholars Word, How Long scholarsword.com</p> <p>Scholars Word's mailing address may be Latin, but its heart lies in Kingston, Jamaica. This is continuing roots reggae with socially conscious lyrics and a multi-dimensional, dub-heavy production.</p>
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