

Arts & Culture

Aren't they darling?



Touring around Canada is our way of sharing with new people our love of music."

—MARIE-JOSÉE DANDENEAU, OH MY DARLING

Clearly, you don't have to wear overalls to play blue-grass. You can catch the lovely ladies of Winnipeg's Oh My Darling in person at one of their upcoming shows at Times Change(d).

Blue-grass gals wooing crowds from Winnipeg to the west coast

COURTNEY SCHWEGEL
VOLUNTEER STAFF

Singing murder ballads and songs about chickens at various cafés and pubs is how Winnipeg's blue-grass sweethearts, Oh My Darling, are redefining the way Canadians think of old-time country music.

Their goal, said the band's fiddle player Rosalyn Dennet in an e-mail, is to "boldly go where no roots band has gone before."

Since the band's formation in 2007, Dennet, along with vocalist Vanessa Kuzina, bass player Marie-Josée Dandeneau and claw-hammer banjo player Allison de Groot, has been nothing but bold.

In the short time that they have been together, these Winnipeg gals have pushed boundaries in their songwriting, and are now working as a unit to compose song lyrics.

"Lately, and most excitedly, our songs are becoming more and more collaborative between us all," vocalist Kuzina said.

Kuzina added that much of Oh My Darling's earlier lyrics came from her own repertoire and songwriting was a less involved process for the band's other members back then.

When it comes to creating their unique, down-home sound, Oh My Darling draws from a variety of musical influences including country and old-time.

"Vanessa is a Dolly Parton addict, so I'm sure a little Dolly might have seeped in somewhere," Dennet said.

"Allison and I are old-time-aholics."

Most recently, the girls have expanded themselves to new musical opportunities outside of Winnipeg. Their current west coast tour has them playing several shows in British Columbia and Alberta.

"Touring around Canada is our way of sharing with new people our love of music," bassist Dandeneau said.

"We love performing in all kinds of venues."

And while being away from home can be stressful at times, the girls of Oh My Darling manage to remain largely drama-free thanks to the strong friendships they have formed with each other.

"We are friends first and band members second," Dennet said.

Although these Winnipeg gals get along most of the time, they admit that tension does arise under certain circumstances.

"When we show up to a gig wearing the same outfit...then things can turn ugly," Dennet said.

Upon returning to Winnipeg from tour, Oh My Darling is scheduled to play at one of their favorite venues, the Times Change(d) High and Lonesome Club on May 29 and 30.

After time away from home, the girls are looking forward to wooing a Winnipeg crowd, de Groot said.

"We are very excited about playing for our friends and families."

- ⇒ Oh My Darling plays May 29 and 30 at Times Change(d) with the D. Rangers
- ⇒ They've got a slew of upcoming local shows – for a complete listing, log on to www.myspace.com/ohmydarlingmusic
- ⇒ You can pick up their self-titled EP at Music Trader, the Winnipeg Folk Festival Music Store and McNally Robinson Booksellers