



JAY SHUSTER

From Bedroom to Basement

Ohbijou's musical movements

Casey Mecija started out as so many musicians before her: writing songs in her bedroom. But Casey had an advantage over most musicians—in the next bedroom over was her little sister Jenny, who could sing and play violin. The two collaborated, together developing a knack for songwriting, both musically and lyrically. When the elder Mecija went to college, the two sisters hooked up with a group of talented and versatile musicians and quickly two became seven. Ohbijou cultivated their indie-folk sound in the Mecija's Ontario basement, their practice space and sometimes-studio.

"We spend a lot of time in my basement," laughs Casey. It was there that the band recorded one of their demos, *The Woods*, a raw, beautiful track that exemplifies the best of Ohbijou's skills and talents, and even features a few fun accidents. "You can hear my dog walking around," she chuckles.

Casey's soulful melodies are especially haunting on the demo, which features stomping on the stairs and other ambient sounds in the vein of Bob Dylan's *Basement Tapes* album, and on Ohbijou's LP, *Swift Feet For Troubled Times*, her lyrics are lulling and sweet, weaving in and out of a layered, orchestral folk-pop sound. The basement

recording session was important to Ohbijou, says Casey. "It captures so many nuances."

But writing songs in her bedroom and recording with the band in the basement aren't Casey's only house-related projects. She recently co-curated *Friends in Bellwoods*, a CD compilation of bands and musicians who have played in the so-called Bellwoods House. Proceeds from the CD (which, yes, will be on sale at the show) go to the Daily Bread Food Bank of Toronto. "We've raised almost \$10,500," she says excitedly.

Leaving the house to play shows is inevitable. They've hooked up with friends and fellow indie-folk band, the Acorn, for this tour as well as a 12" release which features, among originals, each band covering one of the other's songs.

"It'll be interesting to see what happens," says Casey of the tour. "I'm sure there will be some [live] collaborations."

The 12" may well be a taster of the band's sophomore album, which Casey says will be the band's focus upon returning from this tour with the Acorn. But for now, there's a lot to listen to, whether on headphones in your living room or out under the stage lights at the show.

—Matt J. Simmons

Ohbijou
(with the Acorn)
9pm Wednesday, October 15
Lucky, 517 Yates
Tickets \$13 • 250-382-LUCK