

THE L.A. UNDERGROUND

A GUIDE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FAVORITE LOCAL BANDS



ABLOOM

CULTIVATING A SECOND LIFE

BY BRIEN OVERLY

If you are at all familiar with rock, you've no doubt heard of at least one of the bands that have come together to form Abloom. Yet, here is a band that is anything but its former bands, made up of past members from Onesezero, Snot and Soulfly. Consisting of vocalist Jasan Radford and guitarist Levon Sultanian of Onesezero, guitarist Mikey Doling of Snot and Soulfly, and bassist Marcello D. Rapp and drummer Roy Mayorga of Soulfly, the members of Abloom are set to take the rock scene by storm without resting on their laurels.

"We thought we should jam, see what that would be like," says Radford of the early stages of the band's formation. "At first it was like a little side thing, then it became something cool. A life started forming," he adds. Considering Onesezero and Soulfly have toured together before, the joining of its former members was not a shocking revelation.

And the new life that arose couldn't have been more welcomed by Abloom. "We haven't had the opportunity to play music like this in years, and now we just have total freedom. We can be anything we want right now," says Doling. When asked to describe their music, he continues, "We're a pure rock 'n' roll band." Radford elaborates, "I write in an emotional sense, where these guys are rock – just big, loud rock. I think you can see the influences."

Though each member admits to bringing influences from their respective bands into Abloom, they are also keenly aware of the likelihood of comparisons to their previous work. "We don't care about [the comparisons]," explains Rapp. "Everybody has the right to judge us however they want, but we're not going to change." Despite their awareness of potential criticism, none of the band members feel the need to distance themselves from their former associations. Rapp insists, "It's not that we're not proud of where we came from, but it's past. This is what we're doing now."

When asked about the band's name and shortly after a quip from Radford to "be creative," Doling explains the origin of the band's name: "[We] went in the dictionary; the cheesiest cliché for rock bands to do." Though the name Abloom was a lucky discovery, the word has come to represent the band more than its members initially had believed. "The meaning is 'new life' and it's kind of a beautiful sounding name – positive sounding," says Doling. "It describes the time we're in."

Having recently played a sold-out show at the Roxy, Radford is quite aware of the irony of his band opening for Dredg. He explains,

"Onesezero took [Dredg] on the road once. Now here we are, brand new, as an opener ... it's definitely interesting how life repeats."

As Abloom begins the search for a label, the band has found itself back at the beginning of the music cycle. Despite the fact that they had nearly 100 record label people on their guest list, Doling says with a laugh, "We just made our first T-shirts last night. We haven't even attempted to get signed yet."

In the meantime, Abloom is in the songwriting process, with System of a Down bassist Shavo Odadjian serving as executive producer. Armed with a high-profile producer, major-label interest, a strong fan following for each band member, and an increasing amount of buzz building, you can look forward for Abloom to do exactly what Radford believes they will, "We're going to take over."

Abloom will be playing Dec. 17 with Adema at the Galaxy Theatre and headlining Dec. 23 at the Whisky.

CLAUDETTE SEXY DJ

DJ REACHES OUT TO THE BEATS AND THE COMMUNITY

BY BIG RED HAT

As you step inside the doorway to The Factory, you immediately realize that you're in for a journey into yet another subculture of L.A.'s eclectic nightlife. Girl Bar at The Factory provides an exceptionally different type of experience, not just because it is L.A.'s only all-lesbian, Friday night party, but because this space is home to one of L.A.'s most talented and successful vinyl spinners: Claudette Sexy DJ.

As you enter the plum-colored room Claudette calls home, you are instantaneously transmitted into a lavender palace fit to be Prince's living room. The fact that Claudette frequently spins Prince's hits in her "Salsa to Soul" Friday night sets fits almost too well.

"At 'Salsa to Soul' I am playing the latest artists that are well known in the Latin community, along with hip-hop, Motown and Chaka Khan. You know, the old and the new," says Claudette.

As a lucky recipient of Claudette's vision, one can expect to bump, grind, shake and hustle in ways only inspired by truly exceptional DJs. Be it a party for a corporate giant like Blockbuster, or your little sister's Bat Mitzvah, Claudette does it all.

Clearly, the party throwers of the world agree wholeheartedly – her resume is tight. Claudette's range as a DJ has allowed her to do a wide array of events such as the "wrap" parties for "Seinfeld," "Family Matters" and "Quantum Leap," and parties for celebrities like the Backstreet Boys and Oscar De La Hoya. She also continues to be a standard attraction at West Hollywood's annual Halloween Carnival.

Despite her hectic schedule, Claudette makes it a priority to reach out and give back to those less fortunate. She's been an institution in the L.A. philanthropic fundraising community for more than two decades, including DJ-ing parties for everyone from the NAACP, to the L.A. Aids

Project, to L.A.'s Battered Women's Shelter. Claudette is also extremely passionate about giving back on a person-to-person level.

"I never forget where I came from, but you know, I always want to know where I am going too. Walking where I walk, and knowing who to trust and all the stuff that goes with it," explains Claudette. "I have been really lucky with what I do to meet men and women, boys and girls who have said to me, 'I think I want to be a DJ. I have always responded with, 'let's talk, if you're serious.'"

Unfortunately, even for someone whose smile beams from ear to ear as a default facial expression, Claudette's story has been one with quite a few peaks and valleys. Her strength and pure determination have allowed her to rise like a phoenix of bubbly sunshine from the death and depravity of South Central L.A., and the painful grip of substance abuse. Although Claudette was raised in a low income black community in which crack cocaine claimed countless lives through death or imprisonment, she has been able to escape the pull of these societal drains to become the standard by which other DJs measure themselves.

"Claudette has a way of blending salsa and

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- 6) Cockamamie — *Cockamamie*
- 7) Orphans — *Chinatown*
- 8) Starvations — *One Long Night EP*
- 9) Jon Brion — *Meaningless*
- 10) Joi Campbell — *Watch Me*

soul in a way that brings people from all backgrounds together into the moment," says Jasmine Cannick, an L.A. radio personality, music manager and community activist. "Claudette is a wonderful person, with a wonderful spirit that follows her wherever she goes. She was the first DJ I ever heard of in the club scene and now I know why." ■

To find out more about Claudette Sexy DJ, visit her on the Web at www.claudettesexydj.com.

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