

— Misses In Action —

Near Misses Live at Canyons this Saturday

By Jeff Eason

They've been called Charlotte's most original eclectic roots-rock, pop, contemporary folk, country-tinged jazzy quintet. That's saying quite a mouthful. It might be easier to describe the Near Misses as an energetic all female acoustic combo that blends tuneful original songs with outstanding vocal harmonies.

The Near Misses will make its High Country debut this weekend with a free show at Canyons of the Blue Ridge in Blowing Rock. The show is scheduled for Saturday, July 16 and the music starts around 10 p.m.

The Near Misses is made up of bassist Shana Blake, drummer Jill Lurie, guitarist Etta Lea, guitarist Eva Gael and guitarist Reeve Coobs.

The band has produced a live EP but plans to record a full-length album of originals in the near future.

"We've been doing a lot of shows lately and we're really looking forward to the Canyons show," said Lea. "It will be one of our rare three-hour gigs so we've been busy adding some more covers to our original set."

Lea stated that the new covers run the gamut from Pink Floyd tunes performed with a funky folk arrangement to songs by Tracy Chapman, Gillian Welch, Sting, John Prine and Bob Dylan.

"We've dabbled with a couple of heavy metal tunes and a jazzy version of the George Gershwin song summertime also," said Lea.

Although the swinging and singing nightlife has become a labor of love for the quintet, all the members of the Near Misses continue to ply their day jobs to make ends meet. The best thing about the group's music is that

it is a totally collaborative affair. All five members of the group write music and lyrics and the vocal harmonies are the product of closely listening to each other's talents and responding with the appropriate sound.

"The band has only been together for about six months," said Lea. "Our first ambition is to make a live CD that is representative of our stage shows."

To that end, the band has a leg up on the competition as Lea is one of the owners of the Evening Muse, a popular music venue in Charlotte that has a reputation as having some of the best acoustics in the state—especially for unplugged and softer rock acts that don't blow the roof off the joint.

Four of the Near Misses met as a part of the Tosco Music Party, "a 20-year-old, living-room-style song circle party that meets about three times a year in Charlotte. The quartet learned how to harmonize their individual voices as part of the Tosco Singalong Choir and soon found that they needed to express themselves musically more often than the TMP could meet.

"When we first met, we were all single," said Lea, explaining the group's name. "Also there's the added meaning of just slightly avoiding an accident."

In musical terms, you could say that "near misses" means taking risks and having them work out in an exciting, unexpected manner. That's as close of a definition of the Near Misses sound as you can get.

For more information on Saturday's concert, call Canyons of the Blue Ridge at (828) 295-7661.



It's the Near Misses! Etta, Shana, Reeve, Jill and Eva are coming to entertain the mountain masses at Canyons in Blowing Rock this Saturday!