

For Immediate Release: Monday, February 14, 2011

Blame Sally *Speeding Ticket and a Valentine* (Ninth Street Opus, Release Date: Tuesday, May 10, 2011)

When **Blame Sally** takes the stage at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall on April 29 and 30, you can be sure at least two things will happen. First, the quartet will showcase tunes from *Speeding Ticket and a Valentine*, the Bay Area band's fifth album, available a few days later, on Tuesday, May 3, 2011. The shows celebrate Blame Sally's five-year, three-album, mid-six-figure agreement with **Ninth Street Opus**, the label behind the success of **Carrie Rodriguez** and **Sarah Lee Guthrie & Johnny Irion**.

The second thing that will invariably occur is that critics and music industry peers will do their best to out-plaudit one another when raving about the music they've just heard. That's simply the way it's always been with Blame Sally.

Consider, for example, just a small sampling of what's already been said:

"Back and forth motion of the head. Continuous tapping of the feet. Eyes half closed in a near euphoric state. There is only one group you can blame this on: You got it!!" -**Gene Shay/WXPN Philadelphia**

"The band's four-part harmonies should not be missed. Don't blame us if you're the last on your block to check out Blame Sally." -**Performing Songwriter**

"Collectively they create multihued sonic and emotional tapestries, recalling the artful romanticism of Jane Siberry, the rich folk harmonies of the Indigo Girls and the percolating soulfulness of Joy of Cooking." -**San Francisco Chronicle**

"Blame Sally has one of the most powerful word-of-mouth success stories I've heard in recent years. It's like they came out of nowhere and suddenly, everybody wanted to tell you about them." -**Rock critic Joel Selvin**

"One of the finest bands in America right now, like a folk-based U2." -**San Diego Troubadour**

Quite probably, a third thing will also happen: Blame Sally's vital, original sound will inspire so many disparate comparisons - they've been likened to everyone from the **Indigo Girls** to the **Dixie Chicks**, and from the **Wailin' Jennys** to **Radiohead!** - that the uninitiated will have no choice but to check them out and hear it for themselves.

Blame Sally has always been impossible to pin down with clichés and conventional wisdom. Each of the four women put her individual career aside to start Blame Sally when they were in their late thirties and forties - the age at which bands are traditionally supposed to break up and begin solo careers. And, obviously, this is an all-female band, albeit not a "girl group" in the traditional sense, those usually being the novel province of youthful upstarts, not mature singer/songwriters.

Formed in 2000, Blame Sally - **Pam Delgado** (percussion and vocals), **Renee Harcourt** (guitar, bass and vocals), **Jeri Jones** (guitar, bass and vocals) and **Monica Pasqual** (piano, accordion and vocals) - realized early on "that some of the things that might have been considered liabilities were actually assets," says Pasqual, "and that in truth, the very thing you might be thinking you should hide or isn't going to help you is something that people are excited about."

Within a year of their formation, Blame Sally was already receiving radio airplay on **KFOG**, the popular Bay Area radio station, then on **XM Radio** - **Severland** hit #1 on XM's "Starbucks Café" in 2007. Before long they were playing larger venues and attracting increasingly more sizable audiences, including a co-bill with the legendary **Joan Baez** in June 2009 at Stern Grove in San Francisco, where they played for 13,000 people. Their first two self-released albums, *Live No. 1* (2001) and the self-titled *Blame Sally* (2004), increased their audience and by 2007's *Severland* (Dig), they were regularly receiving ecstatic reviews. Writing about that release, **All Music Guide** said, "*Severland* is the quartet's strongest and most cohesive album, the first on which they sound more like a proper band than four solo artists working collectively."

Blame Sally also garnered attention when they posted the music video for the track "If You Tell A Lie" on **Neil Young's** *Living With War* website. The video peaked at #2 in downloads for six weeks, and remained in the site's top 10 for months.

Severland followed a period during which the band underwent some serious reflection - in 2006 Harcourt was diagnosed with and successfully fought breast cancer - and was itself followed by *Night of 1000 Stars* (2009, Ninth Street Opus) - commemorated by a sold-out performance at San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts - and *Live at Stern Grove* (2010 Ninth Street Opus). After a successful collaboration with **Grammy Award**-nominated producer **Lee Townsend** on *Night of 1000 Stars*, Blame Sally opted to self-produce *Speeding Ticket and a Valentine*, in hopes of more faithfully capturing the edginess of their live dynamic.

That new enthusiasm is palpable from the start of the opening track, "Bird In Hand," and in "Living Without You," a hard-rocking song about a woman uncertain whether to be devastated or exhilarated by a relationship's demise. Their restless band attitude also compels the driving rock and roll of Pasqual's "Countdown," a cry for love amid a thorough cataloguing of modern societal narcotics, both literal and figurative. Other highlights of *Speeding Ticket And a Valentine* include Pasqual's raw, honest "Take Me There," "Pajaro Sin Alas," partially sung in Spanish, and "Mona Lisa Smile," a composition of Pasqual's that deals in the most intimate terms with the hard knocks she's experienced in her relationship with her longtime significant other who was diagnosed with MS. Another standout track, "Back in the Saddle," is a true group collaboration, with Renee's teenaged daughter credited as an additional writer.

As has often been noted about Blame Sally, this is an outfit that boasts not only strong compositional and vocal skills, but serious instrumental chops as well. "I don't think there are that many well-known women singer-songwriters who are that good on their instruments," says Pasqual. "**Ani DiFranco**, **Bonnie Raitt** or **Tori Amos**, yeah, but they're often backed up by men. So people do get surprised when they see four women playing really well. It crosses a lot of gender and age stereotypes, too; people who are just into music all really relate to that."

Indeed, people "really relate" to Blame Sally, and that is the key to their broad appeal. "There are a lot of people," says Harcourt, "who become really connected to us, and fascinated by 'Ooh, what's their story?' We've had fanatical fans in their forties, and plenty of young girls who've been super into it."

"That's not everything," however, Pasqual points out. "If we were coming out and our music sucked, or it was not vital-sounding, I don't think that people would be like, 'Oh, cool, they're in their forties,' or whatever." "But they're digging what we're doing, and they're seeing that it's fresh and that it has life and originality."

Life and originality - who could ask more out of music?

Media Contact: Jesse P. Cutler, JP Cutler Media, 415.655.3431, publicity@jpcutlermedia.com