**The Evangenitals**

*Moby Dick: Or, The Album*

“No story comes from nowhere; new stories are born of old.” –Salmon Rushdie

Imagine if Johnny Cash, Bob Marley and Joan of Arc were one woman. Now, imagine that woman gathering a band of eclectic musicians on a crusade to expand the bounds of Country music. The Evangenitals, founded by playwright/director Juli Crockett and opera, jazz & gospel singer Lisa Dee are an alt-country/Americana love revolution made flesh for your listening pleasure. On a quixotic crusade in the key of life hell-bent on breaking hearts open, they are a genre-bending, ever-creating force of nature.

The Evangenitals boast one of the most eclectic resumes in the indie music world. As live performers, they’ve built a fiercely loyal following through a thousand shows at clubs, coffee houses and festivals throughout the world (including Scotland’s prestigious Edinburgh Fringe Festival). Their shows are notable for music that can be bawdy and rollicking in one moment, and, in the next, sufficiently mysterious and haunting to make the rowdiest of beer brawlers pause, turn toward the stage and listen.

The group’s current lineup consists of principal writer/vocalist **Juli Crockett**, gospel/jazz singer **Lisa Dee**, keyboardist **Michael Feldman**, bassist **Joey Maramba**, **Andrea Baker** on fiddle, **Daniel Mark** on mandolin, **Danny Graziani** on fiddle and harmonica, and an ensemble of rotating drummers including **George Bernardo** (Cash’d Out), **princess Frank** (Killsonic), **David Hurlin** (Apocalypso Tantric Boys Choir) and **Rob Shaffer** (Ninja Academy).

Having spent the better part of a decade navigating the choppy waters of the Southern California indie rock world, the Evangenitals have turned their considerable creative attentions to the greatest seagoing adventure of them all. *Moby Dick: or, The Album*, the band’s debut album with Fluff & Gravy Records **(March 18. 2014)**, is a musical swirl of immaculately crafted songs, each interpreting an aspect of Melville’s masterpiece with an approach that tacks between intricate arrangement and the deceptively simple country-inflected tunes for which the band is best known. At times the songs are lushly poetic, at others, coarsely powerful. They are as infectious as they are ambitious, filled with humor, insight, mystery and wonder.

“Moby Dick” might seem a lofty source of material for songwriter-musicians, but for partners Juli Crockett and Lisa Dee, who stand together at the center of the Evangenitals, this sampling of literary masterwork is a natural progression.

The album was recorded entirely in the home studio of Crockett and Feldman (who happen to be married, and have an adorable son named Thelonious), and finds the band being joined by such notable guest artists as: folk legend **Jim Kweskin** (of Jug Band fame), acclaimed avant-garde performer **Dorian Wood**, composer **Jeremy Zuckerman** (“Avatar: The Last Airbender” and recent #1 iTunes Soundtrack “Legend of Korra”), cornet ace **Kris Tiner** (Empty Cage Quartet), and bassist **Edwin Livingston**, who frequently accompanies **Natalie Cole**. Produced by Michael Feldman, bassist Joey Maramba (formerly of Ninja Academy), and the Evangenitals, the record was then mastered by the legendary **Doug Sax** and **Jett Galindo** at The Mastering Lab.

Asked why she turned to Melville’s novel as the point of departure for her songs, Crockett pointed to the precedent of her adaption of the same material for theater a dozen years earlier. “Moby Dick,” she says, “is one of those iconic texts that has a life beyond its pages. People who have never read the book still have an understanding of its themes and its characters. Much like *Don Quixote*, characters like Captain Ahab and the White Whale transcend literature and enter the realm of the symbolic. Great works of art aren’t satisfied with being passively received; we are meant to engage, challenge, and play with them. The greatness of great literature is in its ability to respond with resiliency to the times, over ages and eons. Without changing a word, they somehow manage to consistently change our lives.”

Adapting material as exalted as a volume often referenced as “the great American novel” is an unaccustomed pursuit for popular musicians, though, of course, such adaption is commonplace in other arts disciplines. To the question, “Should popular music mine classic literature as source material?” the Evangenitals’ inventive and revelatory “Moby Dick” answers with a resounding affirmative. Combining pioneer lineage with a love of performing arts, the Evangenitals take listeners on a journey of passion and creative freedom, embracing all of life as source material.

Ranging from truck-stop lullabies to Klezmer-punk-jazz, ballads & barnburners to hillbilly stomp, citing influences from the new-wave intelligentsia of the Talking Heads to the archetypal fire of Johnny Cash, all welded together with the mutant masterminds of Ween: The jukebox at the Mad Hatters tea party is the Evangenitals.

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**Juli Crockett**, the group’s principal writer, first adapted Ahab’s hunt for the mysterious white whale as a theatrical piece created for her thesis production at CalArts, where she obtained an MFA in theater direction. The text of the piece, titled *[or, the whale]* was presented at Hofstra University’s Moby Dick 2001 conference, and used for the TENT group’s inaugural production in Portland, Maine. During her years at CalArts, Crockett also detoured into athletics, successfully competing as an amateur boxer, turning pro after graduation, and enjoying a short but impressive undefeated boxing career of 3-0, with 2 KO’s before she retired to form the Evangenitals. She has not abandoned her theatrical interests. Crockett's *Orpheus Crawling* was performed as part of the NOW Fest at LA’s REDCAT Theater and her work, *The Dawn of Quixote: Chapter the First*, inspired by the writings of the Spanish philosopher Miguel Unamuno, was featured in Los Angeles' cutting edge theater festival "Edgefest” and subsequently traveled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

As a composer, Juli Crockett recently created/performed the live score for Robert Cucuzza’s *Cattywampus* (REDCAT, South Coast Rep) with husband/composer Michael Feldman, and will be writing/performing original music for Marissa Chibas’ new work *Hitchcock’s Purses*. She recently earned a PhD from the European Graduate School. Atropos Press published her dissertation, *Void Creation: Theater and the Faith of Signifying Nothing*, centered on her play inspired by *Don Quixote*. The text of Crockett’s Moby Dick-inspired play *[or, the whale]* is to be published by Delere Press (Singapore) in March 2014, in serendipitous concert with the release of the Evangenitals’ Moby Dick album.

**Lisa Dee** is a classically trained singer whose repertoire includes operas such as La Boheme, Carmen, Don Giovanni, Le Nozze de Figaro, Die Fledermaus, La Sonnambula, Der Freischutz, and the role of Helene in Paul Hindemith's German expressionist opera “Hin und Zuruck.” She has worked as a soprano section leader with the Verdi Opera Chorus in Santa Monica, Angelica Lutheran Church in downtown LA at Burlington/Pico, and the West Hollywood Chorale. Beyond her classical studies, Lisa is currently a soprano section leader with the Selah Gospel Choir in Pasadena and spent several years performing with East L.A.'s experimental revolution Killsonic and the Killsonic Women’s Ensemble, performing with the group in the experimental opera “ Tongues Bloody Tongues” at REDCAT. Her recordings include albums with Dorian Wood, vocals on the Persian movie title soundtrack for San Francisco Film Festival winner "The Tune of Nostalgia" and she can also can be heard singing on her brother Jeff Ott’s (Fifteen, Crimpshrine) punk rock album "Survivor".