

worked, and since the release of the band's first full-length album, *Jukebox the Ghost* have gone from playing at house parties and sparsely populated bars to performing sold-out shows and recently finished a national tour with the indie band Say Hi. The

national tour took the group on a 40-day, 15,000-mile trip in their newly purchased tour van.

"Even in California, people had our album and were singing our stuff," Siegel said. "It was surreal."

For more information visit www.myspace.com/jukeboxtheghost

◎ Nayas

By Alfredo Flores

It's been three years since Thomas Gobena — then with D.C. reggae band Zedicus and now the bass guitarist for the irreverent Gypsy punk reggae rock band Gogol Bordello — strolled into Adams Morgan curious to see what one of his favorite Ethiopian restaurants, Red Sea, had become. In its place was Bossa Bistro and Lounge, where a boisterous, fun-loving crowd salsa danced, head bopped to reggae, hopped along to ska and jammed to various other global party beats performed by beloved resident Friday night Latin band Nayas.

Gobena was impressed and became instant friends with Nayas' core duo, guitarists Soy Lopez and Luis Torrealba. Once Gobena became more established with the globe-trotting Gogol and more connected in the music industry, he sought to help out the fledgling seven-year-old band.

"Every time I go to Bossa, it's a full house, everybody dancing, partying, a great live band, and that's why I wanted to get involved with them," said Gobena, who is now producing Nayas' upcoming new album, due out this year. "Since I really liked the direction they were going, the music, the energy, and all of them as a person, I offered my production services."

It's a tremendous improvement for Nayas compared to their 2006 self-titled and self-produced debut CD, and Lopez was clearly excited about this latest project.

"This is definitely a step in the right direction," he said. "There's a reason why people work with producers, start listening to advice. It's going to sound a lot better, and it'll get us the exposure that we need."

While Nayas — which recently welcomed original drummer Joey Rossetti back into the fold, and which also features percussion-

ist Joey Carrasquillo and rhythm guitarist Lilo Gonzalez — shops the six-track demo of their new album around hoping to sign with an independent label, they continue to hone their craft at Bossa. It was there where they recently enlisted bass guitarist and Bossa owner Rob Colton, Thievery Corporation vocalist Karina Zeviani, and resident Madams Organ jazz saxophonist Walter Bates, Jr., in a freestyle jam session for the ages. The group tested out their new, more social-political songs like the aggressive punk rock-ish "Que Pasa" and "Johnny Murder" — both tracks calling for the end of war and violence, but with addictive, danceable beats long-time fans can get into.

"We've got songs that go from cumbia to straight up punk, letting out this rage," said Lopez. "As an artist you try to digest things that you see in the news, you get heartbroken, and the only way I can digest it is by song. We take serious topics, but put a positive energy into it."

Nayas performs occasional Friday nights at Bossa Bistro and Lounge, 2463 18th St NW. Nayas is also performing at the Black Cat on Jan. 9 at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$15. For More information on Nayas, visit www.myspace.com/nayas.



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◎ Once Okay Twice

By Zamir Ahmed

If variety really is the spice of life, then it's no surprise Once Okay Twice knows how to add its own zing to the D.C. music scene. Made up of five twenty-somethings, Once Okay Twice thrives not only on its differences from the rest of the indie rock scene, but also the differences between its members, right down to their choice of what to call themselves.

"It was the only name we could all agree on," said violinist Erika Seberhagen, the only remaining member from the band's original trio. "People threatened to quit in the process of picking the name for the band. That's what our drummer wanted to call ourselves — Threatened to Quit."

While Once Okay Twice opted for their name over a couple less-than-PC choices, the stories vary on how that name sprung into being, with one dating back to when the band first started out.

"We played our first show and we ran out of songs after six or seven songs," said bassist Nick Hardt. "Everyone's like 'keep playing' and we're like, 'we don't know any other songs,' so they're like 'play 'em again' so 'once okay twice' was what got stuck in my head."

Luckily, the band is on the same page when it comes to music. A mix of indie, chamber, rock and soul, the sound is at once experimental and mainstream. Pulling from influences as varied as Tears for Fears, Hall and Oates, the Bee Gees and the Beatles (one song is directly inspired by "Eleanor Rigby"), Once Okay Twice knows how to connect

with the audience through catchy lyrics that you can sing along to, and energetic, simple rhythms that get you up off your ass and bouncing along with the crowd.

The diversity of Once Okay Twice's influences

stems from the unique personalities each person brings to the group, and the collaborative process they take in writing their songs. Once Okay Twice seems to have mastered bringing out the best in each other to form their collective identity, creating a sound that is greater than the sum of its parts. The band is currently working to mesh their established identity with the style of their new guitarist, Tyler Elliot, a challenge they seem more than capable of meeting.

Once Okay Twice also knows that the music is more than, well, the music, which is why they don't take themselves too seriously on stage. The band mixes up its high-energy style with lighthearted antics and engagement with the crowd, whether it's Hardt's donning of a banana suit for one set or matching their fans drink-for-drink during a performance. The result is a show that can be taken pretty much anywhere.

The band has played a variety of venues, from what they call their best show at the Rock and Roll Hotel in August to a fashion show in Georgetown to more family-oriented events — such as an 80th birthday party for one member's grandmother. Once Okay Twice does come with one warning for those flocking to their shows: "We play loud," said vocalist and keyboardist Ian Thomas.

The band just released some music in December and is working on a second round of songs, with the hopes of releasing them in the spring. The band will be performing at the On Tap "On The Verge" CD Compilation party on January 17 at Continental.

