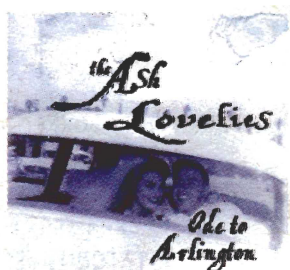


ARTS

AND ENTERTAINMENT

This week on
ARTS DESK
washingtoncitypaper.com/artsdesk
Does the National
Book Festival really
need another day?

one track mind



Ode to Arlington The Ash Lovelies

STANDOUT TRACK

No. 1, "Vernon Street," which, with its prominent synthesizers, is the most electronically minded song on the 14-song *Ode to Arlington*. Such treacly atmosphere, of course, is indelibly associated with the '80s, but according to Ash Lovelies vocalist and synth guitarist Lou Black, the group wasn't initially angling for synthetic pop. "We originally developed it as more of a rock song," says Black. "It had a totally different vibe, and we slowed it down and added lush instrumentals." Though he's quick to point out that he used keyboards invented after the '80s, he does admit to "purposefully throwing in the cheesy '80s backing chorus."

MUSICAL MOTIVATION

As a result of the last-minute musical rethink, Black reworked the lyrics with bandmate Avelynn Mitra to match the new tempo. It turns out Vernon Street in Arlington is where Black, who's a government consultant, has lived for six years. The new lyrics contain a fictional account of a breakup in his house; according to Black's imagined story, the girl leaves town while the guy stays, and after the dust has settled, he decides to go after her. The refrain—"Simplify the soul in me"—reflects "the notion of being able to get out of this current situation, and go to a different city and get in touch with your soul," Black says.

SELF-STARTER

In addition to the Ash Lovelies, Black has a self-titled project and is also the founder of Factor 21 Records. At the moment, Factor 21 only releases Black's projects, but he has bigger aspirations. "It's always been my notion to sign other artists," he says. "There are lots of people out there I'd love to work with. They have my number."

—Erin Petty

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Download an MP3 of this week's featured track.



Nod So Soon: Her career is young, but local singer Carolyn Malachi has a Grammy nomination.

ARTS DESK Prize Fight

Want a Grammy? Join the club.

By Jonathan L. Fischer

Carolyn Malachi has 1,365 followers on Twitter. Two hundred and six people have liked her artist page on Facebook. When she put out her *Lions, Fires & Squares* EP in August, the most notable piece of American press was a One Track Mind column in *Washington City Paper*. That release's best song, "Orion," has

541 plays on MySpace.

The songs on *Lions, Fires & Squares* are very good. And Malachi plans to be very big. The 26-year-old D.C. native wants to live off her music. She wants to tour the world—she's already been flown to South Africa twice to perform. She wants to open schools. But she isn't there yet.

So how, then, did "Orion"

get a Grammy nomination in December?

On its merits, "Orion" is spacious, an exercise in down space pop allegory—not unlike retro-futurism of the kind who, it happens, nominated in the best native recording category.