

Babes in Canyon

Second Cities

Eloquently blending big-pine folk, elegant indie-pop, and sweet vocal harmonies, Babes in Canyon craft music that is eminently engaging and very much of the moment. Born of a spontaneous writing session between Kuinka's Nathan Hamer and his fiancé Amanda Ebert, their debut record *Second Cities* unfolds with an easy grace that belies the relative newness of the endeavor. Nuanced, expertly arranged, yet profoundly catchy, Babes in Canyon stand ready to soundtrack your adventures (spontaneous or otherwise).

As one of the founding members of the band Kuinka, Hamer honed his skills as a singer-songwriter for several years as the band evolved from folk to modern pop. Soon featured performances at dozens of festivals, *NPR* "Tiny Desk" and *Paste* sessions, and several successful national headlining tours followed.

Yet, Hamer's passion for folk had not abated. "I felt a strong urge to go back to my roots," he explains. "There's a passion and feeling I get when writing folk songs that I don't experience the same way with other music. I wanted to start a project that spoke specifically to that." Fate must have been listening, and soon conjured a severe windstorm to strand Hamer and Ebert at a remote cabin near Washington's Mount Baker. "We lost power one night and started playing around with music by firelight to entertain ourselves," laughs Hamer. "I came up with a melody and was humming along with my baritone uke. Amanda wrote out lyrics to an entire song in one sitting. That became the first track for Babes in Canyon."

The duo started writing together in earnest, and soon realized that they needed another element to round out the sound. "Michelle Nuño was our first choice," says Hamer. "She's an incredibly talented drummer and a recent self-taught bassist. We sat in for a session and everything clicked."

A brace of songs in hand, the trio decamped to the Hamer family farm. They converted the bottom floor into a proper studio and recorded everything right there. Joining the band was vaunted producer Jerry Streeter (Brandi Carlile, Darlingside).

Thematically, while each song stands on its own the record is laced throughout with a strong sense of transition and individuality. "We tried to create a sonic landscape of standing on a mountain just after a storm," says Hamer, "when the first beams of sunlight start to break through the clouds." Moody yet bright, Babes in Canyon trade in story-driven folk that moves to the rhythm of the road.