

so safe with my friends around me." "Three Bridges" was executed beautifully. "I Miss the Dog (More than I Miss You)" brought us back around to that Anderson humor. "A Family of Friends," co-written with Sue Fink, rounded out the set with the audience prompting themselves to join in.

In a pair of twirly black cowgirl boots, Jamie walked off the stage, gathering up her long rosebud-print skirt and a songwriter's wit tucked inside long black velvet sleeves, while Wishing Chair remained onstage, easing into the first of their two sets.

Kiya switched to different six-string guitars throughout the two sets. Miriam stuck with accordion mostly, but switched it up with banjo, guitar, or percussion. Together they were powerful, upbeat, melodic, cool down-to-earth wimmin. Their songs were invested in taking an honest and personal approach.

Kiya sang, "I'm a Gypsy girl walking wagon tracks my grandmother made." Guitar and accordion blended in the first two songs. The arrangement on the third and fourth songs was for guitars.

"If Wishes Were Horses" was a really good tune. Kiya played with a slide on her guitar while Miriam held down a good steady rhythm on a hand-held drum. It was upbeat and high-energy that you could feel exuberating from the performers.

Back on the guitars, Wishing Chair went into "Gypsy." The words "speaking in kisses" were drenched in hearty Spanish-style strums. The last couple tunes I heard words sung rap-style that were kept tame under the folk umbrella.

Most folks stayed for the second set. Wishing Chair started off with accordion and guitar and played "The Ghost of Will Harbut." Halfway through the second set we got to play the Wishing Chair Dare-to-Be-Stupid Game Show: the musicians solicited the names of musical genres from the audience and played "Three Blind Mice" in that style. Think about Three Blind Mice in "speed metal."

After that tour de force, the duo rendered "September" in their self-defined Irish rap style. "You woke up a giant" was a line that stood out for me from that one. Next they each sang songs about family. Then there were two more songs before the set ended. The first encore was "Crow," by itself worth the price of admission to see the Wishing Chair play it live. The duo graciously granted a few song requests before walking offstage for the final time.

Before the show I was able to get into some repartee with these fine lesbian artists.

Turns out that Miriam and Kiyah like a range of bands in their younger lives, from Emerson Lake & Palmer and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (Miriam) to Freeport Convention, Joan Armatrading and The Pretenders (Kiya). Jamie was also into Crosby, Stills, Nash &

Young.

What they listen to now ranges from Janis Ian, Solace, and Diana Kroll for Miriam to India Arie for Kiyah, and Burlington's own Rachel Bissex for Jamie.

Kiyah says that the biggest influence on her music has been the political music of the '60s. "I saw how powerful it was in that you could speak out through it and maybe someday I could do something to help people." Miriam was more influenced by family: "My parents were a big influence because I heard all kinds of music, Yemenite to classical and had a sense of no limitations." Jamie's dad "is a country musician so I listen to a lot of country music."

Jamie has the longest history in women's music festivals: she played "open mike at the Michigan Women's Music Festival in 1979 and the Gulf Coast Women's Music Festival in 1990 as a paid gig." Kiyah and Miriam played the National Women's Music Festival in 1996 as the Wishing Chair.

I asked them how women's music festivals have changed over the years. "They are trying to accommodate the new women's music market. There is a wider style of music. There is less politics and more music. We are vast and diverse and we got to deal with people aging and trying to find ways to get the younger crowd. It's hard to get young women to support women's culture because it is so mainstream," the two members of Wishing Chair said. Jamie more or less agreed: "There's less politics. It's more entertainment and party."

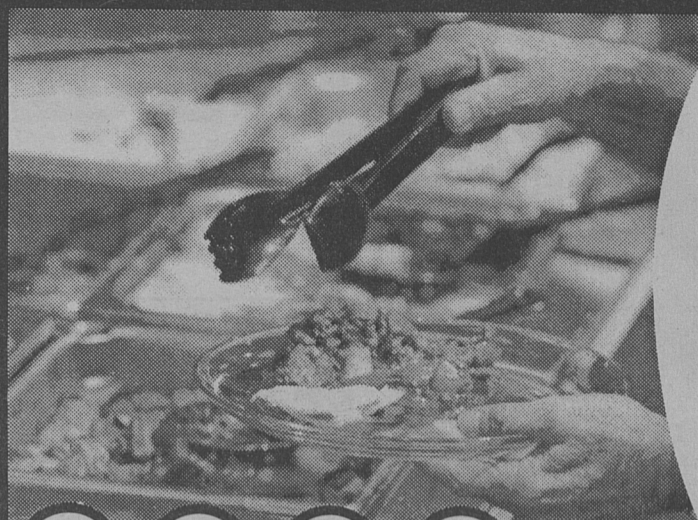
"So is feminism still alive?" I asked. "It may not be recognized as being feminist," said Kiyah, while Miriam and Jamie both said yes, it is still alive.

When asked about Vermont recognizing Civil Unions, Miriam and Kiyah both thought it was great, while Jamie said there ought to be full legal marriage for lesbians and gays.

For a surprising fan-fact, Kiyah and Miriam revealed that "We live on a farm with chickens." Jamie gave up that "I was a John Denver fan in high school." ▼

Steph Pappas is a Burlington-based Guitar Girl whose recent CD 3 Wishes was reviewed in the July issue of OITM.

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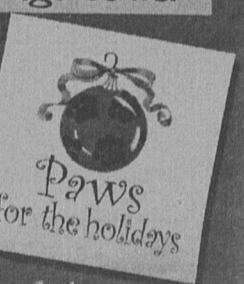
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