

IMPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

For insular Boston indie vets **My Own Worst Enemy**, bass will never be the place

MY OWN WORST ENEMY wants you to know that it is first and foremost a Boston band. Centered on the musical exploits of singer/guitarists Steve Prygoda and Sue Minichiello, MOWE's 15-year lifespan exceeds that of many similar coed institutions, despite the fact the outfit has seldom strayed from the Commonwealth.

Fittingly, Prygoda's side of the band's latest seven-inch is called "Paul Revere" (Pristine Indigo), a typically treble-filled wind-up punctuated by shouts of, "Hey!" Does any song Prygoda writes not have the word "hey" in the lyrics (if not title)? An earlier opus on the band's 2004 album *No Guarantees* was titled "Hey Hey Sunshine," and had Prygoda rhapsodically waxing about his backyard Brighton idyll (a little touch of country right in the middle of Hipsterville), which is a good way to sum up MOWE's twangy-prickly persona, like Sleater-Kinney if Emmylou Harris joined.

Credit Minichiello for these rustic overtones, although she's a girl-rocker at heart: "First and foremost, I'm influenced by powerful female performers," she says. "Women who aren't afraid to put their hearts on their

sleeves and who get their message across potentially without any girly put-ons." She knows her place in the pantheon—Patti Smith is another influence—and eviscerated that pretender to the throne, Courtney Love, on *Treblemaker's* "Cry For Frances" (perhaps MOWE's signature song), which captures expertly everything the band is about: the weepy twang well-suited for Minichiello's sorghum-sweet pipes.

With no bass player to speak of, drummer A.J. Aubrey holds down the bottom end. But being the proverbial "third wheel" in this "marriage"—musical as well as otherwise—comes with its share of drama. As Aubrey says: "These two fight incessantly ... at every practice about every note of every song! But from my perspective, they both write great songs that are really fun to play."

As for the lack of bass—admittedly an anomaly in rock-band frolics—it only puts MOWE on a par with the Doors and the aforementioned Sleater-Kinney, among others. The S-K comparisons are no accident. According to Prygoda, "When we formed, Sue and I were both guitar players, and neither was interested in

switching to bass. Luckily, early on in our formation, we randomly stumbled upon Sleater-Kinney at the Crocodile Café in Seattle in the '90s. They blew us away—all without bass—and it was very inspiring."

More than being members of any hipster clique, MOWE sees itself as firmly in the tradition of classic Boston garage-punk bands like the Real Kids and Lyres, a fact affirmed by a raucous live act that's kept the band gigging steadily in numerous local watering holes.

"Boston's music story has it all—everything a music fan and songwriter needs," says Minichiello. "The most memorable gigs are when we have a lot of people turn out: the crowd is into it, having fun and dancing, singing along and yelling out requests. And when that's combined with people who don't know us, but are willing to listen, open to the possibilities, and end up liking us and talking with us after the set, that's all you can ask for." —Joe S. Harrington

