



[about](#) | [music](#) | [movies](#) | [readme](#) | [foto](#) | [places to go](#) | [boards](#) | [home](#)

[about us](#) | [citizenrobot.com](#)

What is Citizenrobot?

We are a group of friends all vaguely obsessed with the same things. Unlike other pop culture maga/zines, we're not too interested in selling you a lifestyle. We're expressing ourselves for the sake of doing so because no one will hire us to write for Time or Newsweek. CitizenRobot.com was founded in the year 2000 by Brian Saur and Sherrie Gulmahamad in an attempt to escape the pooptacular shenanigans of most film critics. Since then, CitizenRobot.com has expanded to tackle the tough issues of our time, such as, "Duh, what new CDs should I buy?" and "Duh, cultural politics is interesting".



[about](#) | [music](#) | [movies](#) | [readme](#) | [foto](#) | [places to go](#) | [boards](#) | [home](#)

[music central](#) | Spring/Summer 2004

Pick 'N' Indie Band, Volume 11: Gwendolyn NEW

The sassiest, tongue-in-cheekiest, bounciest and quirkiest little Los Angeles band. Oodily!

music central | **pick 'n' indie band** by Sherrie Gulmahamad – **GWENDOLYN**

I want to keep my intro short because Gwendolyn herself deserves all your attention. This is a young lady of great style equipped with a crystal clear, earnest singing voice. She will steal your heart and make you sing Disney songs until you've gone hoarse and the neighbors have called to complain relentlessly. And lo! how us lowly writers struggle to define her spirit. Why, here's a sampling of some of the words people like to throw around when talking about Gwendolyn: "oddball", "splendiferous", "whimsical", "bewitching" and "exquisite aesthetic escapism" (that last one 's a good one). But in all seriousness, If you ever loved Tom Waits, Eleni Mandell, or the catchy tunes of Walt Disney, then Gwendolyn's your gal.



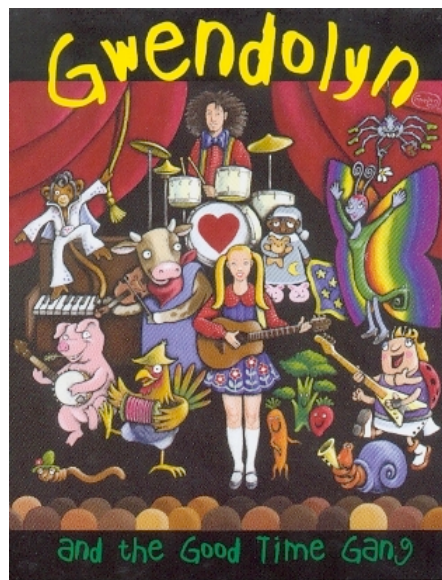
1. Alright, a warm-up question. Who are you, is your name really Gwendolyn, and who are these other chaps in the band? You all have very nice hair, so please name your favorite hair product.

g - Who am I... sometimes I ask myself that very same question and am tempted to rip open my belly, examine my chromosomes all the while yelling, "I want answers!". My name is indeed gwendolyn. For starters, I like cracking walnuts whole from their shell. I haven't spent very much time in the snow. I sing to myself. I drink dark beers and wear bright colors. I'm friendly but moody. I don't wear hair product often.

My bandmates are Douglas Lee on glass harmonica, Robert Petersen on Upright Bass and Quazar on pot and pan percussion. We've been playing as a full group for three years now and are quite good friends.

2. The first I saw you you performed with the Tractenberg Slideshow Family Players, and you were performing in your 'for kids' mode. Which incarnation of Gwendolyn came first, the 'adult' version or the 'kids' one? Can you say that you're more comfortable in one mode over the other?

g - It's a bit like "...the chicken or the egg", isn't it? I feel comfortable doing both; one is my muse - one is my inner-spaz.



3. And why perform for kids? Do you get a lot of feedback from parents and the kids themselves? And is there a particular reason you drift toward the Disney songs? (Your version of 'The Bear Necessities' was stuck in my head for days!)

g - I'm finding kids are more apt to be die-hard fans. They put they're whole selves into what they experience. They don't only love you and want to be you - they become you! I've had many parents say to me, "She makes me call her Gwendolyn all day and she puts on concerts in our living room" - these kids are three years old! Of course, they outgrow things quickly... but everyone remembers their childhood heroes to some degree. I'm not particularly partial to Disney. I especially like Bear Necessities because my friend, Tony Gilkyson (of X) - his dad wrote that song. I'm also partial to Alvin and the Chipmunks, who, coincidentally, was the brain child of producer/friend Joey Waronker's grandpa. It's a small world after all! (oh - very punny...)

4. What's your connection to the rest of LA's indie rock/publishing community? For example, the Fold, LA Weekly, etc. Do you feel like this is a good city for indie rock? Is there a 'scene' to speak of?

g - I've been pretty lucky to have garnered some press and write ups thanks to a few enthusiastic music critics. I feel the LA music scene is like the grass that grows through the cracks of the pavement. We're here, alive and growing, yet separated into patches. I like to imagine how it would be if the sidewalk were to disappear...

5. A lot of people know you from your famous song that featured prominently in 'Chuck and Buck'. Can you tell us about that experience? Did you know when they sought you out how the song would be used? And did things really explode for you after that?

g - Basically, I wrote the Oodily Oodily song as sort of an assignment. Joey Waronker and I were working on some demos. He was in the middle of scoring the film and they couldn't get the rights to use Marlo Thomas' "Free To Be You and Me" - so he asked if I thought I could write something similar. I wasn't familiar with the song, but I wrote a little ditty with the word "freedom" in it that sounded to me like a children's song... Freedom of the Heart (Oodily, Oodily) was recorded in Joey's shed with Smokey Hormel. The film went on to do well and the audiences liked the song. There was no soundtrack for the film, but I put it on my debut album - so folks began ordering my CD through the mail (god bless them). After the film's release, another friend of mine had a stroke of genius and suggested I make a children's album. He thought I'd be good at it and it might help me quit my day job. It turned out I did have a knack for writing kids' music and I did eventually quit my day job... but now I'm super broke and always busy! And I get to act like a four year old rock star - that's the pay off! It wasn't really my idea to begin with but sometimes your fate finds you... even when you're hiding in little indie clubs in Los Angeles. As far as "exploding" goes... mmmm... I put out my own records - tour on my own dime - and work hard to promote the next show. That's not exactly mega-stardom but it's what artists like me have to do when the industry is unable to participate in artist development.



5. The album you sent us, 'Dew' is utterly amazing to me. Your voice is earnest and open and the music is mystical-earthly-country-indie rock. Can you tell us about your musical idols & influences? I love that you use a music saw, water jug, accordion, and vibes.

g - As an Aquarius, I am attracted to artists who are unique... and my tastes are varied. Some favorites include Syd Barrett, Ween, Sun Ra, a lot of traditional and 60s British Folk Revival like The Incredible String Band, Pentangle, Fairport Convention and others contemporary folkies like Joni Mitchell, Nick Drake, Bob Dylan... the cool unusualls - Jimi Hendrix, Neil Young and Harry Nilsson. I like Pavement and Sebadoh, some new Country artists like Mike Stinson and I See Hawks In LA, other club dwellers like Whiskey Biscuit, The Moore Brothers, Eleni Mandell, Ralph Carney, Uke Fink, Green and Yellow TV, Radar Bros., Dengue Fever... there's a lot of good local bands and I enjoy live performance. I rarely shop for records; I prefer to surround myself around those who have giant collections and the talent for turning me on to new music.



6. We love to ask bands about their worst gigs and worst appearances, not out of any sense of maliciousness, but maybe as an inspiration to all aspiring music folks that have had their own hard times as well. Since your band in its kids incarnation takes you everywhere, you have got to have some interesting stories - tell us about a particularly harrowing or funny gig.

g - I just played a grown up gig where someone spilt wine all down the back of my long white dress. In order to save my vintage gown, I had a friend help me soak it in soda water... but then I had to play the show in a wet white dress whilst wearing a g-string. It's a good thing our drummer is also my boyfriend.

Gwendolyn and the Good Time Gang played a show once and I noticed an extra mic stand was set super low, so I invited a 2 1/2 year old fan named Zoe to come up and sing the first song "Farm Animal Friends" with us. She blew everyone away! Not only did she remember all the words but she had good pitch and a set of lungs on her like you wouldn't believe and she did all the animal noises. All the parents in the audience had their jaws dropped. And all the kids in the audience formed a line after that to come up and take a turn at the mic. We didn't plan it, but for each song we had a different kid on stage. None of them sang like Zoe - most of them just stood there... but I think everyone was so inspired by her, it gave them courage to get up and try.



7. When I read a lot of your previous press, I keep seeing the phrases "genre-bending" or "difficult thing to categorize", and of course, LA Weekly famously declared you the "Uncategorizable Artist of 2003". What do **you think your genre is, or do you appreciate that your sound is hard to nail down?**

g - I'm a restless kid... I like to push boundaries and keep things interesting. That's just the way my mind works. I'll listen to Dolly Parton on one hand and Sepultura on the other. And the diversity of my music reflects that.

8. I can't help but notice, as a fellow female, what a snazzy and quirky dresser you are. Care to disclose where you shop? Would you consider your look something you do for the stage only or will I bump into you in town wearing a 60s-style vintage baby-doll dress?

g - For my dresses, I'll shop wherever they're still selling vintage for under \$20. I like to play dress up. My everyday clothes are casual. I don't usually go in for trends. I like to be comfortable.

9. If you read the other interviews on Citizenrobot.com, we have a standard question we ask our interviewees: IF YOU WERE A SHOE, WHAT KIND OF SHOE WOULD YOU BE?

g - Sensible with a stylish flair... Mary Jane.

10. And lastly, this is a new one. Okay, you've all decided to take one of those Kathie Lee cruises together, but the ship went down and now you're stuck on a desert island. WHICH BAND MEMBER GETS EATEN FIRST?

g - I'm a vegetarian.