

lifeblood

the unofficial go-head journal

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LOOKING BACK

With Amy and Emily working on their new album in Nashville, this seems like a good time to take a look back at their success in recent years. The press kits for their independent releases "Indigo Girls" and "Strange Fire" (reprinted in issues #15 and #17) tell most of the story up to their signing with Epic, in this issue we'll pick up in August of 1988. This will be an ongoing series in the months ahead, I hope you enjoy the trip down memory lane.

I have had several inquiries lately asking if there will be a "Gathering of the Go-heads II" in 1994, the answer is a definite "yes". So if you can scarp up some cash and some time off over Memorial Day weekend, come on down and hang out with us. I have also been asked since I will be living there by then, am I going to put everybody up in my apartment. I'm afraid the answer to that is no, but I will do anything else I can to help you plan your trip.

I hope everybody had a nice Thanksgiving, as I type this it is Thanksgiving morning and it is thundering and lightening and sleet is falling on my window, which was open two days ago to let in the sunny 75 degree day. I'm off to eat turkey, take care and be well-

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From The Atlanta Journal, August 4, 1988:

Indigo Girls Parlay Pub Persona Into Contract With Major Label

By Gerry Yandel
Staff Writer

Two records, countless shows at Little Five Points Pub, benefits for the homeless and four years after the first gig, Atlanta's Indigo Girls are knocking on the door of national success.

The songwriting team of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers has gathered a loyal, almost fanatic, following in local clubs. The Indigo Girls soon will find out if the rest of the country is ready for their mellow folk-rock. Miss Saliers and Miss Ray have signed a recording contract with Epic Records, a division of CBS Records, and their lawyer, Russell Carter, said it is an "extremely good deal for a new artist."

Mr. Carter, who also has negotiated contracts for rock bands Guadalcanal Diary, Robyn Hitchcock and Timbuk 3, declined to give details of the contract.

"It's more than just decent," he said. "A lot of companies were interested in them, and CBS understands they've signed a very important act."

Roger Klein, the Epic executive who signed them, has high hopes for the Indigo Girls and his praise for them includes references to music stars such as Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

"I think they're awesome," said Mr. Klein, who ran the Roxy in Los Angeles for seven years. "Their music is so full of emotion, imagine what they're going to be doing in three or four years. Every label on Earth could go out and find two girl folk singers and they wouldn't be anything like [Indigo Girls]."

For the two Emory University graduates who've been singing together since the sixth grade, the signing marks a musical milestone they both felt was somewhere in their future.

Only a year ago they expressed the hope of signing a deal with a "major indy" — a big independent record label.

Instead they've ended up in a contract with a "major major."

But, in typical Indigo fashion, their excitement about the contract is tempered.

"Basically, they're lending us a whole bunch of money and we try to make it back for them," Miss Saliers said. "Getting a record deal is a very vague thing to me. We'll start doing bigger tours but I really don't know what's going to happen."

One thing that has to happen is a record. The Indigo Girls expect to have their first Epic release out next spring.

And from there?

"We'll still be the same old neighborhood girls," Miss Saliers said. "I'll be driving my beat-up Toyota forever. I like my life a lot, and I don't want any major changes."

From an Epic press release, March 1989:



i n d i g o g i r l s

On their self-titled Epic LP, Atlanta-based singer/songwriter/guitarists Amy Ray and Emily Saliers—collectively known as INDIGO GIRLS—serve up a striking collection of ten radiant, dynamically-performed songs highlighting the duo's contrasting yet complementary vocal styles. From the stark intimacy of "Secure Yourself" and "Kid Fears," to the gentle spirituality of "Closer To Fine" and "Prince Of Darkness," to the sheer tunefulness of "Tried To Be True" and "Land Of Canaan," their eponymous Epic debut album is one of 1989's most emotionally-satisfying and musically-compelling releases.

Amy and Emily first met as sixth-graders in Decatur, Georgia, and eventually began singing together as high-school students. Originally billing themselves as Saliers and Ray, the pair adopted the INDIGO GIRLS banner while students at Atlanta's Emory University. While attending Emory and performing local club gigs as an acoustic duo, the twosome took their first stab at recording in 1985 with a self-released single, "Crazy Game"/"Someone To Come Home." The following year saw another independent release, an EP produced by Drivin' and Cryin' member Frank French. In 1987, INDIGO GIRLS made their first full-length album, Strange Fire, once again released on the duo's homespun Indigo label. That disc included "Blood And Fire" and "Land Of Canaan," both of which have been rerecorded for the current LP.

Though the singers weren't actively seeking a major-label deal, the bigtime beckoned nonetheless. Recording their Epic debut with producer Scott Litt at Los Angeles' historic Ocean Way studio, Amy and Emily set out to make a sparse, direct record while still making tasteful use of outside musicians. "We wanted to capture our live sound for this record," explains Emily.

"We recorded the songs all the way through, the way we play them on stage," Amy adds. "But we worked very hard to make sure that every single note was in tune, and we did them over if it wasn't."

INDIGO GIRLS features contributions from an impressive supporting cast. Fellow Georgians R.E.M. add a jangly rock kick to "Tried To Be True," while that band's frontman, Michael Stipe, sings on "Kid Fears." Ireland's Hothouse Flowers provide subtle backup on "Closer To Fine" and "Secure Yourself." Also featured is guitarist John Keane (who produced Strange Fire and has worked with R.E.M., Dreams So Real and Guadalcanal Diary), Patti Smith Group drummer Jay Dee Daugherty, pianist Jai Winding (Jackson Browne), bassists Kasim Sulton (of Utopia/Blackhearts fame) and Dede Vogt (who's backed Amy and Emily on live dates), and percussionist Paulinho DaCosta.

Still, the album is solidly focused upon the two songwriters' voices and acoustic guitars, demonstrating to a broader audience what INDIGO GIRLS' regional following has known all along--that Amy Ray and Emily Saliers possess a unique musical vision as well as the talent to bring that vision to life. And, while the pair write separately and have widely divergent musical tastes, their deeper connection shines through on record and on stage.

"It's a gift, some force that's being passed through us. There's no point in questioning it or trying to figure it out," says Amy. "We never expected to be on a major label, and we're a little nervous about it. We'll more or less function the way we always have. No matter how many people we play for, it's always been important to reach each one of them. That isn't going to change."

INDIGO GIRLS: Ten very special songs from two very special artists, on Epic Compact Discs, Cassettes and Records.

##8903##

From The Atlanta Journal, February 24, 1989:

LP of Emotional Resonance For Atlanta's Indigo Girls

Record Review

Indigo Girls. Indigo Girls. Epic Records.

By Holly Crenshaw

Special to The Journal-Constitution

The eponymous album by the Atlanta folk-rock duo Indigo Girls is a triumph of compelling, masterfully executed acoustic music. On their first major label release, Amy Ray and Emily Saliers perform 10 highly charged original compositions with penetrating lyrics, evocative instrumentation and strong vocals.

The Indigo Girls, who will appear at the Cotton Club tonight, write songs that transcend popular music's superficial tendencies and strike a nerve of human recognition. While expressing healthy doubts about spiritual concerns and personal relationships, their lyrics generally resolve into an eyes-open hopefulness and defiant optimism.

Ms. Ray and Ms. Saliers are both excellent songwriters who balance each other's strengths with musical styles that overlap and

complement each other. Ms. Ray's songs are characterized by driving energy, intense passion and bare-bones soulfulness. She strums her acoustic guitar fiercely, laying down a rhythmic backdrop for her deep, expressive vocals.

Ms. Saliers writes beautiful ballads and melodically sophisticated tunes that are dense with finely crafted imagery. An accomplished lead guitarist, she punctuates the Indigos' songs with ringing solos and fills while singing with warmth and conviction. The two women alternate lead and harmony vocals in a seamless blending of their voices. The combination is magic.

The album opens with "Closer to Fine," one of its most engaging cuts. Written by Ms. Saliers, the up-tempo song espouses a positive message about abandoning heavy philosophical pursuits for a more straightforward enjoyment of life. The song's optimistic spirit is enhanced by the lilting instrumental

support of Hothouse Flowers band members Peter O'Toole on mandolin, Fiachna O Braonain on tin whistle and Liam O Maonlai on a drum called a bodhran.

On "Secure Yourself," Ms. Ray sings her reassuring lyrics over the duo's acoustic guitar accompaniment, with bassist DeDe Vogt's harmonics adding delicate underpinnings. An organ sustains a hymnlike chord as the closing line is offered like a benediction: *Now we all are chosen ones.*

Ms. Ray's "Kid Fears" is a tour de force for her gut-wrenching vocals. Michael Stipe of R.E.M. joins Ms. Saliers on the dreamlike chorus, their words tumbling over each other in a tangle of subconscious imagery. A sense of inarticulate, half-remembered heartbreak and loss builds with each layer as Mr. Stipe and Ms. Saliers repeat the lyrics like a mantra while Ms. Ray's vocals convey anguish and pain.

"Prince of Darkness" is one of Ms. Saliers's standout compositions. Over Ms. Ray's backup vocals, she sings, *The words of my heart lined up like prisoners on a fence/ The dreams came in like needy children tugging at my sleeve/ I said I have no way of feeding you, so leave.*

The side closes with Ms. Ray's riveting solo performance of "Blood and Fire." Armed with only her acoustic guitar and her stunning, richly textured voice, Ms. Ray summons forth every nuance of erotic angst — anger, vulnerability, need and desire — in her song's lyrics: *And I'm calling you, calling you, from 10,000 miles away/ Won't you wet my fire with your love, babe.* Beginning in a whisper, she sings, *I am intense/ I am in need/ I am in pain/ I am in love.* She repeats the words with increasing intensity until her voice breaks with desperation.

The album's most rock-oriented tune, Ms. Ray's "Tried to Be True," opens the second side. Backed by R.E.M. members Bill Berry on drums, Peter Buck on electric guitar and Mike Mills on bass, Ms. Saliers switches to an electric guitar for her spirited break. (The Indigo Girls will be the opening act for R.E.M. for three weeks of the band's spring tour, which includes concerts at The Omni on April 1-2.) "Love's Recovery" is one of Ms. Saliers's most effective ballads. With minimal backup by noted studio musician Jai Winding on piano and Ms. Vogt on bass, Ms. Saliers's lyrics question the ability to adhere to love's difficult road: *Meanwhile our friends we thought were so together/ they've all gone and left each other in search of fairer weather/ So we sit here in our storm and drink a toast/ To the slim chance of love's recovery.*

Ms. Ray performs "Land of Canaan," her metaphor for romantic frustration, as an impatient plea, while "Center Stage," her disquieting look at the pressures of performing, includes the admonition to "look yourself in the eye before you drown."

The album closes with "History of Us," Ms. Saliers's reflection on life's temporal nature, in which her vocal solo and graceful acoustic guitar are augmented by the spare backup of John Van Tongeren on keyboards and Ms. Vogt on bass.

There's a mystical quality in Indigo Girls' songs that surfaces in the interplay of their voices, the vulnerable sincerity of their lyrics and the pull of their melodies. Moving, complex and never contrived, their music stirs up feelings of sadness, elation; and wonder, sometimes simultaneously.

Indigo Girls. At the Cotton Club tonight, with opening act Michelle Malone and Drag the River. 7 p.m. (all ages) and 10 p.m. (21 and older). \$7. 1021 Peachtree St. 874-2523.

From The Washington D.C. Times, March 1, 1989:

Folk-rock Indigo Girls tune up for the big stage

Now that Suzanne Vega and Tracy Chapman have had their time in the spotlight, it's time for them to politely step aside and make room for this year's folk-rock success story: Indigo Girls.

Chances are most people have not heard of Indigo Girls, but that's about to change — fortunately.

Like Ms. Chapman, Indigo Girls — a pair of intelligent and talented acoustic singer-songwriters from Atlanta — are going from playing small clubs filled with several hundred people to playing enormous arenas filled with several thousand people.

This can be chilling to even the most hardened veterans — which Indigo Girls Amy Ray, 24, and Emily Saliers, 25, already are. They have been performing together for the past seven years but never to anything as large as what is coming up as they prepare to tour with fellow Georgians R.E.M. on the middle leg of the group's current tour.

ders keeping the supporting musicians and singers in the background so that they are heard but never overshadow Miss Ray and Miss Saliers. The singers' contrasting vocals and beautiful guitar work remain at the forefront on all the songs.

"He emphasized to us he was really interested in capturing the dynamics, the live sound," Miss Ray says of Mr. Litt. She says she and Miss Saliers "were in two rooms when we recorded. We played and sang at the same time."

Miss Ray and Miss Saliers have known each other since they met in the sixth grade in Decatur, Ga. They began playing together in high school, and continued through Emory University in Atlanta. Although they struggled, both eventually earned degrees: Miss Saliers in English and Miss Ray in religion and English.

Indigo Girls first recorded while

"Scared" is how Ms. Ray describes her feelings about the upcoming tour, which will see Indigo Girls open for R.E.M. from March 25 to April 14 — four days shy of R.E.M.'s sold-out April 18 stop at the Capital Centre.

"But it's going to be fun. We just don't have any idea. I want to just reach as many people as we can. But we have no concept of what it's going to be like."

"It's kind of scary," agrees Miss Saliers. "It's a little overwhelming. We're just going to do the best we can by not having anything lost in the space [of a large arena]. We're just going to put 100 percent into the performance. We look at it as sort of a challenge."

And they note that it can be difficult to reach 17,000 or 18,000 people.

Although on their superb self-titled debut album on a major label (Epic Records) there is backup

help from such notables as Joan Jett and the Blackhearts' bassist Kasim Sulton, Patti Smith Group drummer Jay Dee Daugherty and the groups R.E.M. and Hothouse Flowers, onstage and on tour it is, simply, the two of them and their guitars.

"I think it's really, really hard for acoustic players to reach that size audience," Miss Ray says. "I think the truth is to be there emotionally, spiritually. I've been to acoustic shows at really big places where I was bored, and I've seen acoustic shows where I was moved."

It is more likely that audiences will be moved by Indigo Girls.

The new album deserves widespread success. There are 10 strong, emotionally charged songs — no filler — and each one has a thoughtful message, but the tone never becomes too pretentious, overbearing, hard-hitting or dull.

Producer Scott Litt worked won-

at Emory in 1985, a self-released single called "Crazy Game." In 1986 an EP was released, produced by another member of the R.E.M. crowd, Drivin' and Cryin' member Frank French. (Drivin' and Cryin' opens for R.E.M. at the Capital Centre April 18). Indigo Girls' first album, "Strange Fire," was released in 1987 on their own label.

But with the new album on Epic, Miss Ray and Miss Saliers maintain that they have not changed or sold out. In fact, one of the new songs, "Kid Fears," is in part about refusing to sell out, Miss Ray says:

"Skipping stones, we know the price now/any sin will do/How much further, if you spin/How much further, if you are smooth."

"'How much further' is about reaching it in the music business," Miss Ray explains. "It's sort of a cut down on people who are just trying to make it, people who would sell their soul, who would sell out, who would do anything."

Their hopefulness permeates the album. Each song's lyrics are written separately by either Miss Ray or Miss Saliers, and the two then collaborate on the arrangements.

"That's the only way we can do it," Miss Ray says. "We have different styles. I love Emily's songs, but I can't tap into her. I can understand it, I can feel it, but my vocabulary's not as big as hers."

"She's a more complex songwriter. I use fantasy, images. She's more direct, and tends to nail things down more. Musically, she's not as direct as I am. I tend to write three-chord verses, simplistic, rhythm-oriented."

"It's no problem, because we both like what the other person writes," says Miss Saliers. "Our styles are drastically different. I'd say my lyrics are more straightforward. When we try arranging a song, it works out pretty well. Usually we hit exactly what the other wanted."

From Southern Voice, March 16, 1989:

The Church of the Big Picture

Indigo Girls
indigo girls
Epic Records

The Indigo Girls' debut album on Epic Records begins with a bouncy acoustic guitar/mandolin intro, and Emily Saliers singing about heart, not mind:

I'm trying to tell you something about my life
Maybe give me some insight between black
and white

The best thing you've ever done for me
is to help me take my life less seriously, it's
only life after all.

These words from the playful "Closer to Fine" is a perfect choice to introduce the rest of the world to the Indigo Girls, Atlanta's not-so-well-kept secret.

Amy Ray's harmony kicks in and it's Chill Time. I can't help it, I'm a sucker for a good pop tune. You call it folk? Tomayto, tomahto. Either you like it or you don't. I like it. Well, mostly.

I've never been to Church camp, but after listening to this album I know how it must feel to sing 'til I'm hoarse around a huge campfire with a group of people I love more than anything - even though I just met them at the beginning of the week. This is the Church of the Big Picture and Emily Saliers and Amy Ray are its traveling preachers set to save your musical soul by inviting you to turn your life over to the singer-songwriter. Their sermons range from foot-stomping revivals with hooky, singable choruses you'll learn the first time around and never forget ("Closer to Fine," "Prince of Darkness" and "Land of Canaan"), to poignant confessionals best listened to with lyric sheet in hand ("Blood and Fire," "Love's Recovery" and "History of Us"). Scott Litt's production faithfully captures, enhances and focuses the Spirit of Indigo Girls playing a Little Five Points Pub Revival at fever pitch: powerful, raw, yet naive. I like it. Well, mostly...

Kudos to Litt for not burying in the mix the Girls' trademark Everly-Brothers-like in-sync rhythm guitars in Ray's "Land of Canaan." But why the bubble-gum production? I like the original Neil Diamond version better. (I swear the chorus sounds like a Neil Diamond melody.)

time, then fade'er out. I'd also like to hear Saliers' voice pitched a step or two higher on her own tunes. Her voice, the headier of the two, sometimes loses its flexibility and resonance in its lowest registers. Small details though in a strong debut that, if promoted, should garner fans galore and maybe even a Grammy or two.

Of special note are guest appearances by Hothouse Flowers, R.E.M., Latin Percussionist Paulinho DaCosta and Atlanta's own DeDe Vogt. Emily plays all acoustic guitar breaks including a nice electric solo on "Tried to be True." Each sings one solo tune; Ray's "Blood and Fire" and Saliers' "History of Us," both great songs, represent best their much talked about individual yin and yang. Combined, Ray and Saliers are perfect musical foils. This album will rock you steady and rock you like a baby. Perfect combination for a sucker for a great pop tune.

- Tina Turner

From People, March 27, 1989:

■ INDIGO GIRLS
The Indigo Girls

On their major-label debut album, this female duo from Atlanta unveils a striking style. Their basic stance is folkie, acoustic and unpercussive. The seamless harmonies of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers often have a country feel, though the singers deliver with rock-and-roll intensity. The ladies write separately, and on this album, at least, Saliers has come up with the winners: "Closer to Fine" and "Prince of Darkness." The latter, with its lyrics and melody, echoes Jackson Browne's old composition, "Something Fine." Saliers's one fault is that she imposes too much meaning on her verses, as in "Love's Recovery": "Feeding the cancer of my intellect the blood of love soon neglected/ Lay dying in the strength of its impurity." Ray has the better voice, a husky quality that sounds like Debra Winger, if she were a songbird. Despite the musical contributions of R.E.M. and Hothouse Flowers, the overriding seriousness of tone on *Indigo Girls* makes listening to it in one sitting a rather grim experience. A sampling of the Indigo Girls' heady potion is certainly more satisfying. (Epic)—*D.H.*

For Atlanta's Indigo Girls, the Party's Just Begun

BY HOLLY CRENSHAW
Special to The Journal-Constitution

If the success of their first major album is about to transform the folk-rock duo Indigo Girls into what Cashbox magazine calls "the next big thing," such predictions apparently haven't gone to their heads. Last week, on the verge of the first big tour of their career, Amy Ray and Emily Saliers spent their last few hours in Atlanta in a typical evening for them -- performing for a hundred Emory University students at an unadvertised benefit for Project Open Hand, an organization that delivers free meals to homebound AIDS patients.

The overwhelmingly positive response to their album has catapulted the two women from singing in local bars for a hundred or so followers to performing for crowds of 10,000 or more a night as the opening act on 17 dates of R.E.M.'s current tour. A recent onslaught of media attention found the duo juggling numerous requests for interviews while finishing up their first video and preparing for the tour that brings them to The Omni tonight and Sunday night.

In a recent interview, Ms. Ray said the last few weeks have been "a little crazier" than they thought they'd be. "Every day, we wake up and we think we've only got this much to do, and then we get calls and we've got THIS many things to do. We didn't expect so many people to respond this well all at first."

Since its release on Epic Records in late February, the Indigo Girls eponymous album has drawn rave reviews from Billboard magazine ("stunning"), the Boston Globe ("the best debut album of the year"), The New York Times ("pop album of the week"), the Washington Times ("superb ... this year's folk-rock success story") and other national publications.

Making its debut at No. 19 on College Music Journal's non-commercial radio charts, the album's

sales of 50,000 copies during its first three weeks are about three times higher than an average first album by an unknown act, according to an Epic spokeswoman.

Still, the Indigos say the impact of their success is just starting to sink in. "I went up to visit an old teacher of ours in high school, and there was a line of people outside his door waiting to come in to get me to sign autographs," Ms. Ray says. "Isn't that wild?"

"I was embarrassed at first, but then I was really flattered because these high school students were listening to our music, and we really wanted to reach that age group," she says.

"I try to look at [signing autographs] like you're signing yearbooks for friends ... because the only way we can have fun is if it's a mutual communication. So that's why I almost want to say, 'Well, will you sign this for me too?'"

Though the duo has performed in front of a few thousand people before, being asked by R.E.M. to play on their tour for such huge audiences produces "a different kind of nervousness," Ms. Ray says. "Opening for R.E.M. is like throw-up nervous, because there's so many people out there and you only have 30 minutes."

"I think at first [R.E.M.] had real reservations about whether we could handle something like that," Ms. Saliers says. "I think they were just being nice, but they were afraid that maybe our feelings would get hurt if the crowds were rude to us. But we said, 'Well, if that happens, that's OK.'"

Ms. Saliers says their solo performances make her more nervous "because that's really our chance to communicate with people, when the focus is just between the audience and us. A room of 3,000 people makes me very, very nervous because then it's real, and all the faces are right there."

After leaving the R.E.M. tour, the Indigo Girls will make solo appearances in Boston and New York before they join Violent Femmes in Washing-

ton, D.C., as their opening act on a tour of several Eastern cities. In May, they've scheduled a solo tour of the West Coast and have tentative plans for a European tour, where their album is receiving critical acclaim.

With the new demands on their schedule, Ms. Saliers says her biggest adjustment "has just been a fear of the unknown, a fear of having to be away from home so much."

"Sometimes I like travelling and sometimes I don't," Ms. Ray says. "It's just my cats -- I'm worried about my cats. I really am. I think that's the only thing that really bothers me." Ms. Saliers adds, "We try not to talk about the cats when we're gone."

The demands on their time occasionally bring on fleeting moments of panic, they say. "They usually happen at a certain time, like when I'm really tired," Ms. Saliers says. Ms. Ray adds, "Mine happens when I haven't done my laundry in two weeks."

Both women answer with a resounding "no" when asked if they have any plans to leave Atlanta. "The first thing we told the record company was that we wouldn't move," Ms. Ray says. "We said we wouldn't sign if we had to move." The Indigos say they hope to play occasional dates in Atlanta whenever they have time.

"One thing we really want to say is just how thankful to Atlanta we are," Ms. Saliers says. "I can't think of a more supportive group of people than those who've helped us along the way. It's just an overwhelming feeling of gratitude."

"It's true," Ms. Saliers adds, as Ms. Ray laughs at her partner's unabashed sentiment.

"I know," Ms. Ray says, nodding. "I mean, I agree. I'm trying to think of how many different ways you can say it. It's true. There's just no way to express it. The Atlanta people will clap for us and say how proud they are and -- you don't know how to say it. You want to say, 'No, you've got it all wrong. We're thankful to you.'"

From The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 1, 1989:

From an Epic press release, April 7, 1989:



FLASH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

April 7, 1989

THE INDIGO GIRLS ARE RED HOT!

CRITICAL RAVES AND R.E.M. TOUR BOOST GEORGIA DUO'S DEBUT LP

Amy Ray and Emily Saliers—singers, songwriters, guitarists—are the INDIGO GIRLS, and their self-titled Epic debut album is attracting the attention of some of the nation's top (and toughest) pop critics.

"INDIGO GIRLS' debut album," wrote Stephen Holden in The New York Times, "shows intense, churning artistic ambitions. Ms. Saliers's 'History Of Us'...is one of the more striking folk-flavored ballads of recent years." And The Boston Globe's Steve Morse adds: "The INDIGO GIRLS... have simply made the best debut album so far this year!"

The Atlanta-based duo have just completed work on their first video, "Closer To Fine." The clip was directed by Tamra Davis, whose diverse credits range from Tone-Loc to the Bangles to Soul Asylum. No sooner was the video finished than INDIGO GIRLS set out on their first national tour. And what a tour: two young women and their acoustic guitars, opening for R.E.M. in venues of 10-20,000 capacity! (See next page for complete itinerary.)

INDIGO GIRLS are Red Hot—on Epic Cassettes, Compact Discs and Records.

INDIGO GIRLS: ON TOUR WITH R.E.M.

April 4	Riverfront Arena	Cincinnati, OH
April 5	Cobo Hall	Detroit, MI
April 6	Richfield Coliseum	Cleveland, OH
April 7	U. of West Virginia	Morgantown, WV
April 9	Centrum	Worcester, MA
April 10	Madison Square Garden	New York, NY
April 11	Memorial Auditorium	Syracuse, NY
April 12	Maple Leaf Gardens	Toronto, CANADA
April 14	Forum	Montreal, CANADA
April 15*	T.T. The Bear	Cambridge, MA
April 16*	Bottom Line	New York, NY

*headlining dates

...AND WITH THE VIOLENT FEMMES

April 17	Warner Theater	Washington, D.C.
April 18	University of Virginia	Charlottesville, VA
April 20	Memorial Hall	Chapel Hill, NC
April 21	Grady Cole Center	Charlotte, NC
April 22	t/b/a	Columbia, SC
April 23	University of Florida	Gainesville, FL
April 25	Visage	Orlando, FL
April 26	Sun Rise	Fort Lauderdale, FL

From The Long Island Newsday, April 9, 1989:

It's Indigo, Not Dark and Blue

LIKE ANY BAND in its early stages, the Indigo Girls worry about misinterpretations. The music of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers has been called dark and heavy, and understandably, they don't like that characterization.

"I don't see how anyone who comes out to see us play could come away with that impression," said Saliers. "I'm not shy about telling people that they have problems in person," said Ray, "but *never* on stage. I hate preachy songs unless you're Bob Dylan or maybe Michelle Shocked. It's impossible to do them well."

Perhaps a better way to regard the Indigos is as the most recent arrivals from the Athens, Ga., pop music scene. After all, they'll be opening for R.E.M at Madison Square Garden tomorrow evening, then headline at the Bottom Line next Sunday. But, being the latest from a scene that has produced bands as different as the B52's, Pylon and R.E.M doesn't say much either.

The Indigo Girls are a folk-rock band with illustrious friends like the members of R.E.M and the critically praised Irish group, Hothouse Flowers,

who contributed to the Indigos' debut record on Epic.

Saliers and Ray, friends from childhood, began playing professionally when they attended Emory University in Atlanta together.

Despite their similar backgrounds, they bring different influences to their songwriting. While Ray writes in a direct, traditional song format, Saliers' songs are almost prose set to music — a technique she said she picked up from Joni Mitchell. "'Hejira' showed me you can put as many words in a line [as you need] in order to say what you have to say."

And, of course, they are politically concerned. The liner notes on "Indigo Girls" encourage their listeners to support Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Coalition for the Homeless and PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) on whose behalf they've collaborated with R.E.M's Michael Stipe. Although the album does contain such strident lyrics as "I will not be a pawn for the Prince of Darkness any longer," Saliers tempers them with such reminders as "The best thing that you've done for me/is to help me take my life less seriously, it's only life after all."—Martin Johnson

From The New York Times, April 12, 1989:

The Pop Life | Stephen Holden

■ The Indigo Girls ride the acoustic wave ■ Lone Star Cafe is ending its long run ■ Madison Square Garden group is to book the Beacon.

The Indigo Girls

"There's more than one answer to these questions pointing me in a crooked line," sing the Indigo Girls, a thoughtful acoustic duo from Atlanta, in "Closer to Fine," the first single from their major-label debut, "Indigo Girls" (Epic).

The song, whose plain folkish harmonies echo 1960's groups like Peter, Paul and Mary and the New Seekers, is a contemporary ballad that describes a restless search for answers to life's larger questions and that involves everything from reading the Bible to aerobics. It concludes, "The less I seek my source for some definitive/The closer I am to fine."

The earnest, post-collegiate duo, which opened for R.E.M. at Madison Square Garden on Monday and which will appear at the Bottom Line again this Sunday, are the latest beneficiaries of an acoustic folk revival that has swept Suzanne Vega, Tracy Chapman and Michelle Shocked to prominence. The Indigo Girls, Amy Ray and Emily Saliers, met as sixth graders in Decatur, Ga., and began singing together while in high school. They adopted their name while attending Emory University in Atlanta.

The two women, both of whom write songs, have strikingly different musical personalities. Ms. Ray's material and delivery have a harder folk-rock edge than the writing and singing of Ms. Saliers, who composed "Closer to Fine."

"Joni Mitchell is one of my musical heroes, and I listen a lot to the Roches," Ms. Saliers said in a telephone interview from Washington last week. "I wouldn't want us to be pigeonholed as confessional. We think of our songs as communal expressions. We're all on the same boat going through the same experiences. It's common ground to write about relationships and such."

From The New York Daily News, April 12, 1989:

These girls are blue in name alone

By DAVID HINCKLEY

Daily News Staff Writer

YOU WILL EXCUSE THE INDIGO Girls if they feel they're inside a giant tumbler this week, and sometimes it lands on one end and sometimes the other.

PREVIEW

Monday they opened for R.E.M. at Madison Square Garden. "One way or the other, it'll be a shocker," Emily Saliers was musing beforehand. "It will be real interesting to see how two acoustic guitars sound there."

Actually, they sounded surprisingly good. But they may sound even more at home Sunday when the Indigo Girls come back to the Bottom Line for a headline show of their own. For Saliers and Amy Ray, that's a more natural environment.

Although the Indigo Girls' self-titled Epic debut album only came out a few months ago, they do already have two distinctive stamps: beautifully intertwined guitar and vocal work and complex, often introspective songs.

"I work on lyrics a lot," says Ray

with a laugh. "Usually I'll end up with about five pages of lyrics before we work it down into a song."

The Indigo Girls met as high school students in Decatur, Ga., and have been playing around Atlanta for about seven years. Though their music is somewhere between folk and rock (Saliers is wary of the former term and Ray isn't sure two acoustic guitars add up to the latter), they don't feel their singing is part of any Tracy Chapman/Suzanne Vega trend.

Not surprisingly, Saliers cites R.E.M. as one of her favorite rock 'n' roll bands. Her favorite artist when she was growing up, however, was Joni Mitchell, with a nod to Dylan.

Ray also grew up on Dylan, as well as Elton John and rock 'n' roll in general. In fact, she says, she sometimes has to deliberately cut back. "At one point I found myself going through a whole Replacements phase, and I know it influenced me. For a while I listened to Dreams So Real all day long." Somewhere there are young guitarists who will one day say the same thing about the Indigo Girls.

From The Atlanta Journal, April 26, 1989:

It's Full Speed Ahead For Local Indigo Girls

By Russ DeVault

Staff Writer

Barely a month after releasing their debut album and embarking on a tour with R.E.M., Atlanta's Indigo Girls are appearing on "Late Night With David Letterman" tonight and tentatively planning concert tours later this year with Bob Dylan and Neil Young.

Vocalist-guitarists Amy Ray and Emily Saliers are scheduled to perform at least one song and perhaps spend a few minutes discussing their accomplishments and plans with Mr. Letterman during his hourlong NBC show (12:30 a.m. on Channel 11). Their initial appearance on network television coincides with negotiations for the two musicians to tour Europe this summer with Mr. Dylan and perform in the United States later this year with Mr. Young.

At the same time, "Indigo Girls," the folk-rock duo's month-old LP on the Epic label, has reached the 100,000 sales mark. After debuting at No. 196 with a bullet two weeks ago, the critically acclaimed album has reached No. 145 on Billboard's pop chart.

Several of the 10 original folk-rock songs on the LP are being played by college and alternative music radio stations across the nation. "Closer to Fine," the first single, is to be shipped to commercial radio stations and record stores nationally in late May.

Ms. Ray and Ms. Saliers, who followed their 15 arena shows with Athens's R.E.M. (including a two-night stand at The Omni) with a six-concert theater and club tour of Florida with Violent Femmes, say they are delighted — but not apprehensive — about appearing on Mr. Letterman's show.

"We talked with Paul Shaffer [the show's musical director and band leader] Monday, and we're going to do 'Closer to Fine' and supposedly get a few minutes to chat with David Letterman," Ms. Saliers said.

"We're both Letterman fans," she added during a brief stopover in Atlanta on Monday night while en route from Florida to New York City.

They also are longtime fans of Mr. Dylan, whose plans for a summer and fall tour of the United States and Europe have not been announced. "Touring with him hasn't been firmed up yet," Ms. Saliers said, "but we're looking forward to it."

Although the two musicians hope they will do some concerts in the Northeast with Mr. Young in June, their immediate plans are to perform during a CBS Records convention in Boca Raton, Fla., later this month and at the International Music and Media Conference on April 30-May 3 in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

"We're happy about the way things are going," Ms. Ray said, "but we want to stay in touch with the grass roots because that's the way we work best. I hate to admit it, but I felt a little out of touch [performing in arenas with R.E.M.]. I lost some confidence, and I felt there was a lot of hype going on."

The problem vanished, Ms. Ray said, when Indigo Girls returned to smaller venues with Violent Femmes and for solo shows on the East Coast. "We prefer the smaller venues because of the kind of music we write and play," Ms. Saliers pointed out. "But we do want to do a big ol' show in Atlanta sometime soon."

From East Coast Rocker, April 26, 1989:

Don't Color Them Blue

by Jay Lustig

Near the end of my interview with Atlanta, Ga.-based singing/songwriting/guitar playing duo, The Indigo Girls, Emily Saliers had a question for me. She wanted to know if I found the band's new self-titled album depressing.

"No," I replied, "not at all." She then explained her reason for asking. "We just got reviewed in *People*," she said. "And I don't know why I keep thinking about this, but the guy who wrote the article had told our publicist, 'Oh, man, I love the album, it's really great,' and then the second-to-last line in the review is, 'Listening to this album in one sitting could be a rather grim experience.' And he said that I imposed too much meaning on my lines."

He wasn't the first and he won't be the last reviewer to take a potshot at this wordy, introspective folk-pop duo—wordy, introspective folk-pop duos are uncommonly good targets for cynical reviewers. But it was the implication that the album was depressing that upset Saliers. In reality, The Indigo Girls are sort of upbeat.

Sure, The Indigo Girls—Saliers and her partner, Amy Ray—often sing with anguish about life's dead ends (such as the dead end of a failed romance). But disillusionment can lead to a better understanding of things, and the Indigo Girls are careful to sing about the lesson learned as well as the difficulty of the lesson.

The unusual thoughtfulness of their lyrics isn't the only thing that has made Saliers and Ray successful: They write strong melody lines for both their ballads and their uptempo songs, and their rich voices blend with an ease that only comes with years of performing together. The two Indigo Girls write their songs separately, but seem to work closely with each other on everything else. Their ideas about music have also, to a certain extent, evolved in tandem over the eight years they have worked together.

"When we started," said Ray, "we

were doing a lot of cover music—that's always the way—but we were probably a little more 'folk-pop,' and now I consider us a little more on the edge of something a little bit different from just folk-pop. When we started out we were sort of like James Taylor-style, and I think that we've moved. There's a little more grit. I mean, my songwriting has changed from being totally introspective ballads to, hopefully, hitting you in the face a little more."

The album's first single, "Closer To Fine," with its forceful vocals, ringing guitars, and catchy chorus, has hit a lot of people in the face. The lyrics warn against relying too much on philosophy, academia, or any one particular path toward enlightenment, but Saliers, who wrote it, didn't intend it to be a blunter statement against academia, as some people take it.

"My dad is a professor, and I really believe in education," said Saliers. "If you're fortunate enough and have enough money, higher education is a really valuable thing. I didn't mean to pick on it." Still, it captures an antiacademic attitude that many students have felt. "When we sing that song for younger audiences and college students, they scream at that line, 'I got my paper and I was free.'"

And that's kind of fun. It's like having a 'rah-rah' song."

Saliers actually came very close to being an English teacher herself. "Right before I was a senior in college I was planning to go on to grad school," she said. "I really wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted to be a musician too, but I really didn't know if it was feasible; I didn't know if I wanted to pursue it, because I wasn't into the business side of it or anything like that. Amy has always been really good at that."

"And so I was kind of fluctuating, and she was doing all the work, and I was going, 'Well, I don't know what I want to do,' and finally she gave me an ultimatum and I decided to stick to it. And ever since then I haven't really look back."

The Indigo Girls has a strong "alternative rock" flavor, helped largely by guest appearances by R.E.M. and Hothouse Flowers. In addition to performing on the album, R.E.M. invited the Indigo Girls to open shows on their latest U.S. tour, including their recent show at Madison Square Garden. The support of R.E.M. was obviously a great break for The Indigo Girls, but it really isn't that surprising—both bands come from Georgia, and anyone who has heard both can affirm that they're cut from a somewhat similar mold.

"We got to be friends with Michael (Stipe) first—I saw him at a show in Athens," said Ray. "I think we went to see the Killkenny Cats or something; I asked him to come hear us, and he did. This was probably a year-and-a-half ago. We had seen them around and stuff like that, but they had never really heard us."

"He came in and he liked us and he wanted us to help him write a song for PETA (People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals), so we got together and worked on it, and that was cool; we became really good friends just through writing a song together. It brought, like, a total connection."

The song, "I'll Give You My Skin," will either be released on a PETA benefit album, or as a benefit single, according to Ray.

"And then," Ray continued, "we did the Athens Music Festival with Michael, and learned about six tunes together and did them. We had the same producer (for *The Indigo Girls*) as them just by accident (Scott Litt); we picked this guy who we thought was great, who was their producer. And, well, we knew we wanted to use Michael on 'Kid Fears,' because he had sung that with us a lot before. 'Tried To Be True' was kind of a skeleton of a song that I had written, that I wanted a band on, and it was just perfect for them."

Being from the South has had a certain influence on the band, just like it has influenced R.E.M. "I'm a real southerner, through and through," said Ray. "My whole family is really southern, and the generations go back. There's a lot of perversion, and weirdness, and like, the flavor that's in Flannery O'Connor's literature. Those are the things that have really influenced me about the South—everything is more intense to me—and the slowness, just the style. I don't really know how to explain it, but it really has affected

"Once you get past a certain number of seats that you see, it's all the same—a mass of seats," said Saliers. "And in a lot of ways that makes me less nervous than in an intimate gathering, when people are listening very intently. Sometimes I get so nervous that I can't even pick up my glass of water after a song. But on this tour I've been able to pick up my glass of water, so that's a good sign."

me."

"It's hard to pinpoint," said Saliers. "That bizarre, deep part of the South that's kind of mysterious, that Amy was talking about—I think that really comes into play in the songs, but it's hard to say exactly how it comes into play."

Hothouse Flowers, who don't come from the South, are another band that The Indigo Girls feel a deep connection with. "We met Hothouse Flowers," said Ray "because our A&R man and their manager are really good buddies, and we got the chance to open for them in New York. We hit it off really well, friendship-wise, and we hung out in Atlanta together some when they came through. It was kind of a spiritual bond—we're bonded with them in a major way."

"They had one day off in LA on this tour, and they used it—'cause it was our first day in the studio—they used the whole day to come in and play around and put some stuff down for the album. They put a lot of stuff down; we just picked what we wanted—it was totally spontaneous."

Other guests include bassist Kasim Sulton, of Utopia and Joan Jett & The Blackhearts fame, drummer Jay Dee Daugherty, guitarist John Keane, bassist Dede Vogt, pianist Jai Winding, and percussionist Paulinho DaCosta.

"John Keane is a guy that had produced our independent album, *Strange Fire*, and he's a really good player, and we had a lot of things we wanted him to do. We had played with Dede Vogt in Atlanta. The other people are people that we thought of because we wanted their particular style. Like, Jay Dee Daugherty did drums because Scott Litt said, 'What kind of drums do you want?,' and I thought, whoever plays with Patti Smith has a really good sound, so let's see what that sounds like. All of us decided together on the instrumentation, and then we sat down and made a list of the people whose styles would be appropriate."

Despite the presence of instrumentation on the album, The Indigo Girls tour as a duo. This has put more pressure on them, as they made the transition from clubs to arenas, but they said haven't had much difficulty with the larger venues.

"Once you get past a certain number of seats that you see, it's all the same—a mass of seats," said Saliers. "And in a lot of ways that makes me less nervous than in an intimate gathering, when people are listening very intently. Sometimes I get so nervous that I can't even pick up my glass of water after a song. But on this tour I've been able to pick up my glass of water, so that's a good sign."

"We haven't changed our act" to

accommodate the bigger crowds, said Ray. "The only thing we've done is to make things a little smoother. We used to spend a lot of time tuning in between songs and stuff like that. I did; Emily didn't really spend any time tuning, but I did. We haven't done that."

"The thing is, I think that we're connecting with people and getting a good response; I think we are, but there's no way to tell. In clubs, you sort of hang around after you've played, or during the breaks, with people, among people, and you know how people are feeling and it's a mutual, community-type experience."

"At a big old coliseum, you play and then you go backstage, and if you come back out again, the other band is playing and you can't mingle and talk. You can't give everyone a backstage pass."

She said that, in a way, it's easier to play in an arena than in a small club.

"We're used to playing 500- or 1,000-people rooms, and not having a guitar tech to tune our guitars, or

change our guitars if we break strings, and the monitors usually weren't that great, and all those little technical things that make you so comfortable so you can just concentrate on playing."

"You know, at first I was so intimidated by the size of those halls, and opening for R.E.M.," said Saliers, "but if you don't think about those kind of things then it doesn't get in your way and you can just go out and do your thing, which is what's been happening. We feel very fortunate—though I don't know why all this good stuff has happened to us—but we're very fortunate."

"We never expected a record deal," said Ray. "We just moved along, step by step, we just wanted to make sure we didn't stagnate. We released things independently, and we would have released another one if we hadn't gotten a deal. We were already planning on it. We just want to keep making records. I think things will finally hit us—right now it's kind of all abstract."

From Sound Warehouse, May 1989:



THE NEVILLE BROTHERS "Yellow Moon"

The legendary New Orleans group, The Neville Brothers, have put together a musical jambalaya on their new A&M release "Yellow Moon." This new release consists of a couple Bob Dylan covers ("Hollis Brown" and "God On Our Side"), and a helping hand from the Dirty Dozen Brass Band to round out the set of Neville Brothers originals. The single "Sister Rosa" is a tribute to Rosa Parks for her part in sparking a civil rights movement in 1955.

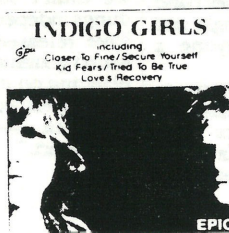
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



SARAYA Saraya

Saraya is a rock 'n' roll band with a powerful debut self-titled release on Polydor Records. Featuring the incredible female vocals of New Jersey's spitfire Sarah Saraya and the power guitar punch of Tony Rey explodes Saraya onto the music scene with their top selling hit, "Love Has Taken Its Toll."

\$8.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



INDIGO GIRLS "Indigo Girls"

Two voices blending and complementing each other yet standing out on its own is what you will hear from "Closer To Fine" from Epic Records. Indigo Girls has a style that ranges from folk ballads to soft rock that is beautiful and tender and other times angry and haunting.

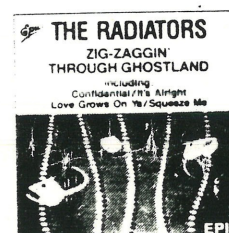
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



SARAH McLACHLAN "Touch"

Sarah McLachlan is a 20 year-old vocalist/songwriter/musician from Nova Scotia, Canada that has a passionate and haunting style with a touch all her own. The essence of her debut Arista album is a blend of classical influence and post-modern attitude with passionate and haunting songs, each with their own moods.

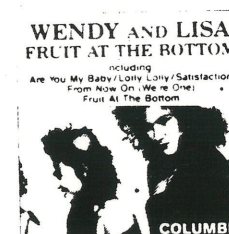
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



THE RADIATORS "Zig-Zaggin' Thru Ghostland"

If you want to experience for yourself what Louisiana rock is all about, pick up the new release from The Radiators, "Zig-Zaggin' Thru Ghostland" on Epic Records. Word-of-mouth travels about this band, and their ever increasing corps of fans, or "Fish Heads" as they are so affectionately called, which rival the audiences of the Dead and Jimmy Buffet in dedication. Their album radio single, "Confidential" is full of momentum to the top of the charts.

\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



WENDY & LISA "Fruit At The Bottom"

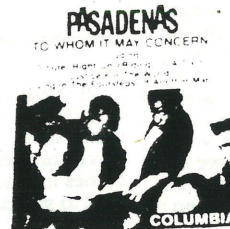
Wendy & Lisa are not yet your ordinary female vocalists. Their distinction lies not just in the fact that they were principal players in Prince's Revolution or that they are terrifically skilled musicians. Their uniqueness is a result of the skills and past experiences that have enabled them to create a one of a kind blend of irresistible grooves and well-considered lyrical insights. "Fruit at the Bottom" is their Columbia release that is ripe with collective urban and pop energy. "Are You My Baby" is their first single.

\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.

THE PASADENAS "To Whom It May Concern"

Five young men from London who's background comes from their 3 year stint as the premier dance band known as Finesse and also influenced by gospel and soul music from the 60's and 70's. Their music has been described by "The Face" as gifted, with harmonious voices, well-versed in the art of frenetic dancing and structured songwriting. "To Whom It May Concern" is their new Columbia Records release.

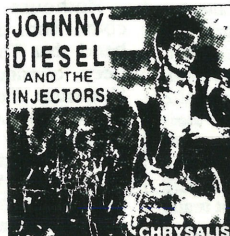
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



JOHNNY DIESEL & THE INJECTORS Johnny Diesel & The Injectors

This debut release from Chrysalis Records is ready to blast out of Australia with guitars revving, saxes wailing and an explosive mixture of rock and blues. With Terry Manning, a natural as producer, having worked with artists from Joe Cocker to ZZ Top, this band is shooting a hot rock line straight up the charts.

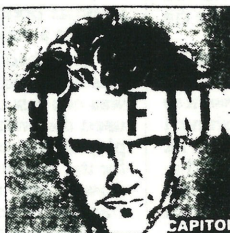
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



TIM FINN "Tim Finn"

As the founder of Split Enz, Tim Finn has produced an album of remarkable vision for Capitol Records. Finn has achieved a real musical maturity that is reflected in his songs drawn from a wide variety of inspirations and true to the way he has felt over the last two years.

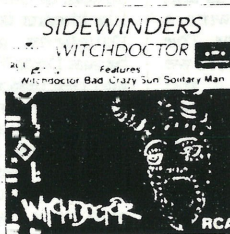
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



SIDEWINDERS "Witchdoctor"

Just what the doctor ordered. "Witchdoctor" that is, the new RCA Records release from the Sidewinders is appropriately called "Witchdoctor" which is a tribute to their and roots of the desert. "Witchdoctor" the title track and first single, is a potent dose of Southwestern rock flavored with a little bit of country.

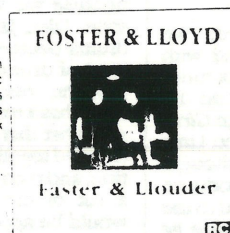
\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



FOSTER & LLOYD "Faster & Louder"

"Faster & Louder" from RCA Records is an album that stands to reintegrate hillbilly music with the rock music it originally spawned. This songwriting duo has stretched the boundaries making the country stuff countin' and the rock stuff rockin'.

\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



HOUSE OF FREAKS "Tantilla"

Everything you want in a two man band and more is what House of Freaks' new release "Tantilla" from Rhino Records is all about. This fuller and more accomplished sound touches on such diverse lyrical themes as personal loss and racism.

\$10.99 C.D. \$5.99 LP/CASS.



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