

The Mynabirds

Following 2010's critically acclaimed debut and a year on the road touring as part of Bright Eyes, singer-songwriter Laura Burhenn headed into the studio with producer Richard Swift and emerged with *GENERALS*, a sophomore album fully armed. In place of the Zen meditations found on the Mynabirds' first album, *GENERALS* is filled with armies of stomps and claps, sweeping full spectrum orchestrations, and moments that range from intensely personal pleas to shout-out-loud protests with teeth.

GENERALS is both a protest record and concept album. It's fueled by a full decade of Burhenn's political frustration and aimed at finding a revolutionary yet pacifist way in a world where, these days, it seems warring comes quick. Musically you can hear echoes of early PJ Harvey, politically-charged Nina Simone and *Low*-era David Bowie. It gets down and hip hop dirty, flirts with African melodies and rhythms, goes four-on-the-floor for all out dance jams and has plenty of percussion. Burhenn even plays drums herself on a couple of songs, and a 5-gallon bucket in homage to DC street Go-Go on another.

Lyrically, *GENERALS* sings the voice of the collective frustration, then moves beyond that. "It was important for me that this record made sense of my own anger and turned it into positive energy," Burhenn says. "I needed it to be transformative -- of both the individual and the body politic. It's as much a meditation on Walt Whitman's hope for America as Gandhi's directive to 'be the change you want to see in the world.'"

The album's name comes from a Richard Avedon photo entitled "Generals of the Daughters of the American Revolution." Looking at the portrait of upper class ladies in their pristine satin gowns, Burhenn considered her own supposed eligibility to be a member of DAR and thought about what true revolutionary American women look like. The lineage of women that have stood up to injustice for well over a hundred years -- women like Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Gloria Steinem, Naomi Wolf -- they get their hands dirty. And Burhenn wanted to pay tribute to that.

In conjunction with the release of the album, Burhenn launched a portrait project called The New Revolutionists (www.thenewrevolutionists.org). In an election year when so much time, energy and money will be wasted in political contests, Burhenn wanted to shine a light on women making a difference -- often on shoestring or even nonexistent budgets -- in their own communities all over America, whether they're making headlines or not.

The album will be released on Saddle Creek on June 5, 2012.