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Anti-Social Music and Gena Rowlands Band team up to record songs from the hit indie opera *The Nitrate Hymnal!*

New York, NY—February 28, 2006—Right on the heels of its acclaimed debut recording, ...*Sings the Great American Songbook*, **Anti-Social Music** (ASM) teams up with the **Gena Rowlands Band** to release *The Nitrate Hymnal* on Lujo Records. ASM is a collective of musicians and composers from New York that includes members of **The Hold Steady**, **Ida**, **gutbucket**, and **World/Inferno Friendship Society**. The Gena Rowlands Band is comprised of veterans of the Washington DC post-punk scene and the creators of the original multimedia DIY opera, *The Nitrate Hymnal*.

WHAT IS THE NITRATE HYMNAL?

The Nitrate Hymnal is a record of songs taken from the hit post-punk opera of the same name, and sounds like: where the string section melts into guitar feedback, jazz brushes give way to explosions of sound, and four distinct voices sing the story of a woman's dying dream.

The Gena Rowlands Band and ASM met three years ago during the creation of the original production of *The Nitrate Hymnal* by **Bob Massey** (Gena Rowlands Band, ex-**Telegraph Melts**) and **David Wilson** (True/False Film Festival). The opera was inspired by 50 years of actual home movies given to Bob by his grandfather, and told a fictional story of a couple who obsessively filmed their lives. Staged in a Masonic temple, lit by three giant projection screens, and bringing together players from D.C.'s underground rock scene (ex **Circus Lupus**, **Crownhate Ruin**, **Frodus**, **Mary Timony Band**) and New York's avant-classical scene, *The Nitrate Hymnal* sold out its four-night run and won lavish press attention.

Bob Massey on the original inspiration for *The Nitrate Hymnal*:

"This idea for an opera arose out of a gift from my grandfather. He gave me all the 8mm home movies he shot during his marriage to my grandmother.

In many of the early films, my grandparents are younger than I am now. It's a bit of a cliché, but one can almost see their innocence. They were ordinary people, about to live through amazing events that would change them and history around them. In the first film, shot in late summer of 1941, they are honeymooners horsing around on the beach, flirting, splashing and playing. They have no idea that Pearl Harbor is only months away. What a moment. I think the innocence captured in that film is something they tried desperately to preserve and relive for the rest of their troubled life together.

*All their subsequent moments are dilutions of that one, in a way. You can see that feeling fading in each subsequent film clip. I began to wonder what happened to them in between those happy little Kodak moments. This is the story *The Nitrate Hymnal* uncovers, in between the films - of the moments lost. The role of film and photography in shaping memory is no longer abstract, but deeply personal."*

Says *The Washington Post* about the original production:

"Despite Massey's pedigree as a post-punk guitarist, much of 'Hymnal' hearkens back to 17th-century opera, with lithe, chantlike vocal lines written as nearly continuous recitative, and a chamber orchestra (acoustic strings, electric guitars, keyboards and drums) playing a gently supportive role. But if the form of "Hymnal" hasn't reinvented the operatic wheel, its sound world feels fresh. That's not to say Massey doesn't raid a few genres – post-punk rubs shoulders with post-Sondheim; progressive jazz melds with fusion; and brief visits are paid by Shostakovich, Piazzolla and Glenn Branca – but the musical stew is very much his own. There's less guitar-

driven music than you might expect from an indie-rock composer. But the canny orchestration ... uses the guitars for color, to growl threateningly under the strings or simply add a little grit."

For the recording, the through-composed score was cut into songs and reorchestrated by ASM and Gena Rowlands Band, then recorded in three days powered by passion and caffeine. Mixed at Brown Rice by **Warn Defever** of **His Name is Alive** and mastered at Silver Sonya by **TJ Lipple** of **Aloha**.

WHO IS ASM?

"If Yo-Yo Ma and Ian MacKaye scored an Alfred Hitchcock film, Anti-Social Music might sleep through it[...]Imagine an orchestra wearing formal attire and combat boots, then replace the conductor's baton with a bottle of Jack Daniel's." –Magnet, 10 Records You Missed in 2005

"How much new chamber music has been composed, let alone performed, for the general public as of late? Not enough, according to Anti-Social Music. They're bringing not punk rock but punk orchestra to the people. More precisely: original chamber music by way of DIY" – New York Press

"[...Sings the Great American Songbook] is indie and post-rock's version of an orchestra. Noisy and cluttered, then awkwardly beautiful. Accordions, tubas, free-jazz sax, noise-punk guitars, dancing pian-y and tender singing going to and fro. Nothing else like it. Ever. (5/5 STARS)" – Real Detroit Weekly

Perhaps you've never heard of Anti-Social Music, and, let's be honest, we're not surprised as the country is teeming with low-rent chamber music groups fighting like rabid little black-clad wolves for a bite off the fundraising bone. What makes Anti-Social Music so damn special, anyway? Who, exactly, do they think they are?

No-one in the group is simply a chamber-music lifer or a downtown-jazz snob or a punk-rocker dabbling in the "legit music" world. ASM members are also in: **the World/Inferno Friendship Society**, **Gutbucket**, **The Hold Steady**, **Ida**, **Alarm Will Sound**, **Gloria Deluxe**, **Beauty Pill**, **Slow Six**, **Jon Langford's Ship and Pilot**, **the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra**, **Garden State Philharmonic**, **New York City Opera**, **New York Underground Orchestra**, and the bands of **Elliott Sharp**, **Akiko Pavolka**, and **Jenny Toomey**. Basic New York scene eclectics. All the fun without the pretension.

Since its founding in 2000, ASM has performed the world premieres of 68 new pieces by 23 young composers from all around the country. Inspired by the success of *The Nitrate Hymnal* production, ASM recently started a commissioning program called ASM Sleeps Around, which pairs the group with non-classical folks from various genres to write pieces for ASM to perform. The first commission, from avant hip-hoppers **Dalek**, was premiered in December 2004 and has been recorded for release sometime in 2006. The second commission, with experimental rocker Warn Defever from His Name is Alive will be recorded this year.

ASM's debut record "...Sings the Great American Songbook" was released in December on Peacock Recordings. ASM hits NY's prestigious Merkin Hall on February 23, 2006. For information on how to submit works to ASM for performance visit www.antisocialmusic.org.

WHO IS GENA ROWLANDS BAND AND BOB MASSEY?

"It's tragic, hilarious, brilliant writing." –Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"Beautifully dissonant; unsettling and enrapturing in equal measures... This ambitious experiment succeeds on pretty much every level." –Splendid

"The former Telegraph Melts member has pointed his latest project's arrows at Hollywood and the way movies cause us to perceive the world and our place in it... La Merde et Les Etoiles (French

for "Shit and the Stars", if I read it correctly) is so unified a work of brooding ghost cabaret miserablism you could practically call it a concept album, though the term is a little strong for a record with no overarching narrative. The music could qualify as chamber pop if it had any pretense of wanting to be pop-- instead the violas, vibes, clarinets, and cellos drift along behind Massey's wine-stained baritone, forming a sort of stream-of-consciousness backdrop that drifts in and out of dissonance, occasionally dissolving to a minimalist wisp." – Rating: 7.1/10 – *Pitchfork*

The Gena Rowlands Band (with Bob Massey, Jean Cook and David Durst at its core) plays late-night music. When all the broken glass is swept up after the party that was D.C. punk, someone has to sing a wistful song to close out the night. The rage, the politics, the dissatisfaction haven't gone away. Everyone's just a little wiser now.

If you were to look up the bios of the Gena Rowlands Band players, you would encounter names like **Fugazi**, **Tsunami**, and **Dismemberment Plan**. The GRB are people who were reared in that Washington D.C post-punk community. Members have toured and recorded with those names and more. But the big deal here is that the GRB leaves those names and sounds behind. What you *hear* is utterly different. Strings stolen from a b&w movie score—or New York's experimental scene. The skitter of jazz brushes. A voice that draws more power from a whisper, a wry lyric, or a soulful falsetto—than a scream.

The Gena Rowlands Band's Lujo debut, *La Merde et Les Etoiles*, came out in 2005. Having already toured the U.S. with **Andrew Bird**, **Enon** and **the Dismemberment Plan**, the GRB will hit the road nationwide in 2006. Besides the GRB, Bob Massey has also toured and recorded with **The Out Circuit**, **Tsunami**, **Jean Smith** (of Mecca Normal) and **Telegraph Melts**.

CATCH ANTI-SOCIAL MUSIC ON TOUR

February 23, 2006
Interpretations Series
Merkin Hall, NYC

March 29, 2006
Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, NY

April 1, 2006
Improvised and Otherwise Festival
Brooklyn, NY

CATCH GENA ROWLANDS BAND ON TOUR

March 15, 2006
SXSW Showcase at Karma Lounge
119 W 8th Street in Austin TX

CD RELEASE PARTY

Late June TBA

For more information, contact Jon Polk or Lucas Jensen: 706.543.9455 or publicity@teamclermont.com

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