

the calm, which Carrin Harris could not account for, conjured upon us a silence which no one dared to violate with talk. This was the first truly spiritual episode of our mission. Then, something truly wonderful happened.

The author, both real and fictitious, wishes to apologize for the delay in this transmission from Noecia, as both are preparing for the coming spring labors.

Concert Review

The Innocence Mission

1 9 9 0 Tour

A Review

by Kent Nebergall
and Larry Shuman.

There are concerts where the band gives its all, and you walk away knowing that you got your money's worth. Then there is that one life-changing experience to which every concert afterward will be compared. We didn't believe this until last night, when our perspectives were forcibly broadened. Doubtless now no concert shall ever be the same.

The Innocence Mission played at the Cabaret Metro amidst the rather bizarre setting of black leather, punk rockers, attempted yuppies, and an opening band that sounded like a garage rock reject. From the mood of the videos played pre-concert and the general atmosphere, I half expected Innocence Mission to be booed offstage. They are definitely not your typical metal/thrash/punk hybrid; closer to a cross of Fleetwood Mac/U2 (circa "Unforgettable Fire")/and the finer vocal moments of Kate Bush. Karen's vocal style, at once powerful and hauntingly beautiful, lacks a decent comparison. Given that she out-classes most of the trained vocalists we've heard, we were amazed to learn that her

professional training has been minimal.

Opening up with "Paper Dolls" and "I Remember Me", they gave the impression that they were a bit nervous. No mistakes, but they were definitely tense. The crowd, after having just been blasted by the "The Pedal Jets", loosened, and took to the floor right beneath the stage. No one danced; all attention was focused entirely on the group. That appeared to help, as Karen thanked the crowd following the opening songs.

Relaxing a bit, the band cut into "Surreal"; the spots went blue, catching every wisp of cigarette smoke and setting a 'surreal' mood. The concert gained momentum from this point on. Karen showed her versatility by switching between keyboard and acoustic guitar when the band played one of several new songs they scattered throughout the set. The new music was just as tasteful and rich as that which we came to love on their current self-titled album.

The mix and performance of the band rivaled the excellence found on the CD. In fact, the quality exceeded that of any concert, secular or Christian, we have ever seen, period. Live music doesn't get any better without being played acoustically ten feet in front of you.

The guitar work of Don Peris, while not in the forefront, definitely gave depth to the quality of the music and mood. Don's quiet personality seemed to counterpoint Karen's soft richness. Mike's interpretive bass playing and Steve's drumming are complimentary, giving this band an air of fullness. The strength of each element combined creates an absolute masterpiece of tone and purity. This is simply a work of art, and very well worth catching should the band play anywhere near you.

After a total of seventeen songs and two encores, the band finally retired for the late evening (the concert didn't start until 11:30 PM). What started as an evening we might have considered wasted ended up as the best live musical experience of our lives.

Introduction

Guess what? YES, you actually have decent deadlines this year! How amazing; your editor has actually done something in advance. In this same envelope, you should find the writer's calendar for 1990. Of course it is somewhat subject to change, but it should keep us on schedule if everyone, including me, abides by it. We will also "go independent" this year. This spring I graduate from Speed Bump U. and enter the fascinating and terrifying land known as the REAL WORLD. As for publishing after that point, I hope to own, lease, or at least have access to a Macintosh computer very soon after finding a place to live. At that point, we should also have a permanent address and decent documentation of the work we do. A commitment to a professional printer and laser printing access should also come soon, Lord willing.

subvolva, The Launch to Worlds Within Worlds.

This issue also sees the beginning of the long planned Subvolva series. This will eventually lead to a series of scientific, analytical, and fictional pieces set in a period 300 to 3000 years in the future. We will begin in the spirit of the science fiction works with a basic introduction to the concept.

The main idea is to stimulate your imaginations. We will look at things from such a radically different systematic approach that you will undoubtedly learn something to apply to today's problems. In the same sense, the original Utopia by Thomas Moore criticized the systems of his day by contrasting them to a fictional island across the world.

It may end up being simply a visual guide to future science fiction plots. It may spark an elegant guide to a world that learns from our mistakes. Time will tell. But no matter what we eventually do with it, it promises to be interesting.

Poetry and Poets.

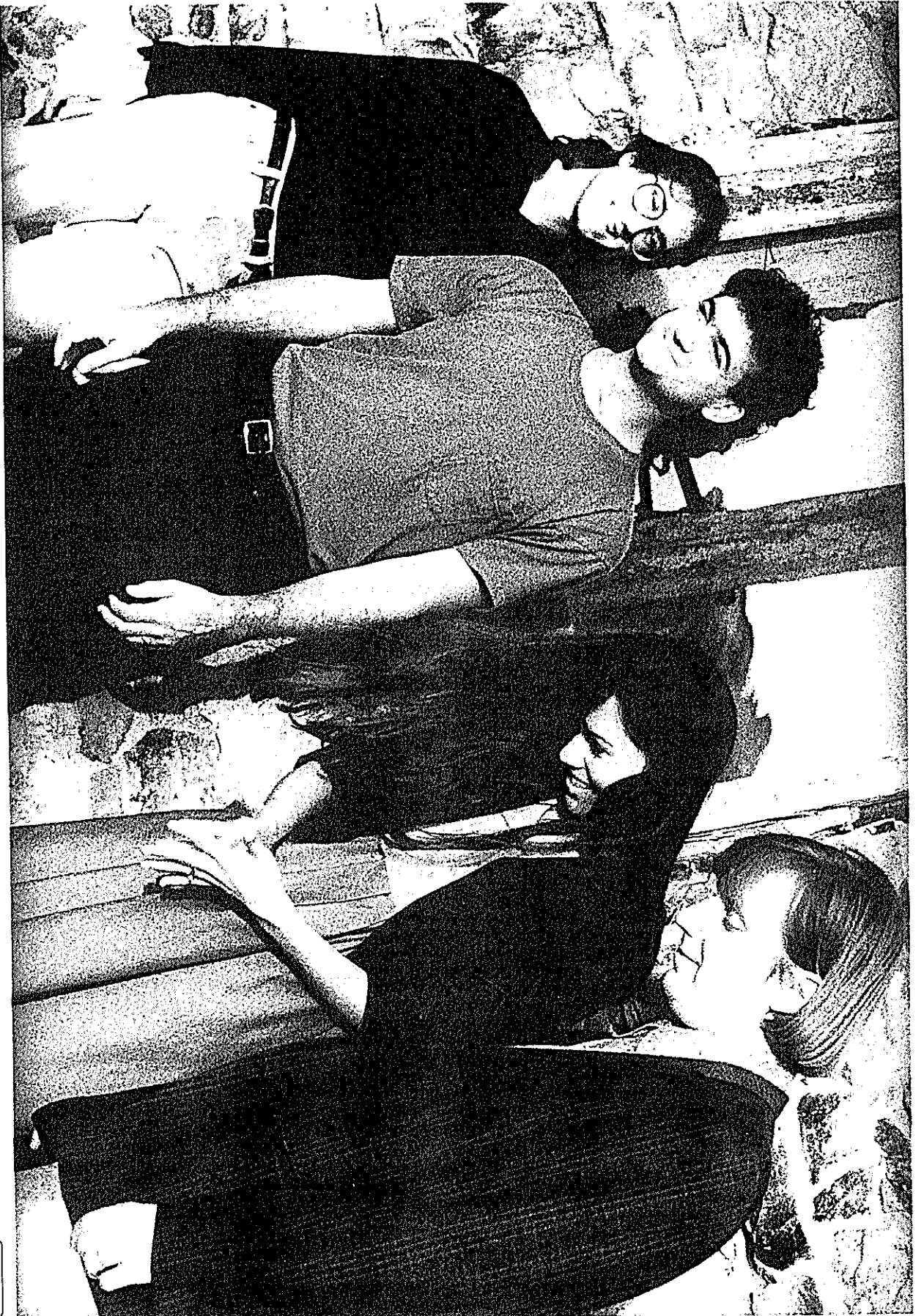
You may notice rather a lot of excellent poetry in this issue. This is not counting two submissions we didn't have room for (next issue, Justin, I promise).

We add to our repertoire the works of Venus Shannon. She, too, is a student at S.B.U. and is considered the definitive supermom by most of the students here. Her devotion to Our Father and her talent in expressing beauty is admired by those who know her as a friend.

~~If we continue with so much excellent work, I will have no choice but to~~ start the next expansion program early.. I had planned on keeping the group small until we got the bugs out of the system, learned the software better, and improved the quality of printing to something acceptable. Now I see we will have to accelerate this process so that I have a publication worthy of the work we're seeing. My compliments, all of you.

The Innocence Mission.

Two weeks ago we interviewed and saw in concert a group that to us defines excellence in music. This group, The Innocence Mission, did through the medium of soft rock what we have hoped to do in our writing- express the very mind and soul of man in a Christian context. A review of the concert is at the end of this issue. The next issue will include the interview and a review of their current album.



THE INNOCENCE MISSION

PETER ASHER MANAGEMENT INC.



PHOTO: PAM SPRINGSTEEN

July 1991

INNOCENCE MISSION

With the release of their new A&M album UMBRELLA, **THE INNOCENCE MISSION** find added dimension in their evocative, luminous sound. The Lancaster, Pennsylvania-based quartet: Karen Peris (vocals, keyboards, acoustic guitar), Don Peris (guitars), Mike Bitts (bass), and Steve Brown (drums) built upon their first recording experience to deliver a confident, adventuresome album which boasts an exceptional batch of compositions replete with genuine emotion, lyrical intelligence and unaffected spirit.

"There was tremendous joy in writing and recording these songs," says Karen Peris. "We worked very hard on them without ever feeling that we were working."

The Innocence Mission's beguiling vision finds full expression in the song "*And Hiding Away*," a cloudy-day reverie of intimate charm. "*Now In This Hush*" and "*Every Hour Here*" touch upon spiritual themes with fine-etched poetry and atmospheric sound.

From the understated power of the title track to the striking narrative of "*Joan*" and the fervently imaginative "*Evensong*," there's a wealth of mood and feelings throughout UMBRELLA.

"A number of the songs are about people's unique strengths; about my own frailties," says Karen. "I guess the songs start as something I want to express for myself, but I hope they touch upon a lot of common feelings."

Finding the extraordinary within the commonplace has been an element of The Innocence Mission's music for some time. Their upbringing in Pennsylvania's scenic Lancaster County and shared musical influences (everything from The Beatles and Peter Gabriel to James Taylor and Kate Bush) have contributed to their highly individual identity.

The band was formed in 1982 while all four members attended Lancaster Catholic High. They played regularly in their own area during and after school, but it wasn't until the group began playing in nearby Philadelphia that they really took off.

The Innocence Mission attracted not only a substantial following but considerable critical attention as well. Steven Rea, writing in the Philadelphia Inquirer in December, 1987, expressed the view of many when he praised Karen's "strong, supple voice...the quartet's economical, inventive instrumentation, and...the sheer originality and emotional power of the songs themselves."

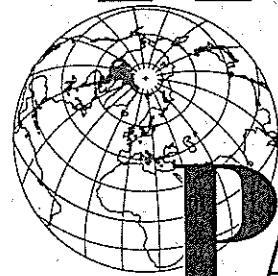
The public at large received their initial taste of the band when **THE INNOCENCE MISSION** was released in the summer of 1989. The album featured such standout tracks as "*Black Sheep Wall*," "*Wonder Of Birds*" and "*I Remember Me*," gaining the band considerable exposure on U.S. college radio and attention overseas as well.

In the fall of '89, The Innocence Mission embarked on their first U.S. tour. "The audiences were very kind," says Steve Brown. "The most thrilling thing about the tour was to go into cities we had never been to before and find people there to whom our music meant something."

1990 found them still on the road, however the next album was never far from their minds. "Touring is important and often a great deal of fun but writing and recording are what we love to do most," says Don Peris.

Larry Klein, producer of the first album, returned for the UMBRELLA sessions. "When Larry

A&M PRESS DE PART MENT



B I O G R A P H Y





INNOCENCE MISSION: MAKES THE GRADE WITH THE COLLEGE CROWD.



Picture Of Innocence. A&M Records act the Innocence Mission has been at Bad Animals in Seattle working on its upcoming release for the label. Dennis Herring is producing the sessions on Studio A's API console, with engineer Chris Fuhrman and assistant John Burton. Shown, from left, are Herring and Innocence Mission members Don Peris and Karen Peris.



The Innocence Mission, *Glow*

To say that time can change things may in fact be an understatement.

With The Innocence Mission's third album, *Glow*, we certainly find change. The band is sporting a new look, not only with producer Dennis Herring, but with a new style and a slightly new tempo.

At one time, The Innocence Mission were marvelled to the likes of 10,000 Maniacs, Kate Bush and The Cowboy Junkies. With *Glow* we hear even more similarities and this album's step-up in tempo could prove to bring The Innocence Mission more acceptance throughout the music community.

The first single, *Bright As Yellow*, immediately brings to mind The Cowboy Junkies. Although Don Peris' carefully placed sliding guitar riffs are beautifully perfected, the pop-like style of short repeating phrases leaves more to be desired. Not even Karen Peris' flowery lyrics can save this song from repetitiveness.

↑ music 1989
Express
#142

Billboard
Magazine
8/13/94

Sides
Issue 4

1995

Sparked by energy and the more-or-less consistent emphasising of beats, *Glow* is a fabulous and unique addition to The Innocence Mission's repertoire. As with *And Hiding Away* from the *Umbrella* LP, the lead-off song, *Keeping Awake*, masterfully fills the starting role. Its dancing calliope-style sound reminds us of 10,000 Maniacs' *Circle Dreams* days. This song also backtracks to the band's earlier days by blending in a male background vocal. The elegance and smoothness of this harmony certainly makes this one of the best tracks on the album.

As the days of the impressionistic picture paintings are now but gone, possibly due to the exit of former producer Larry Klein, it seems that these last few moments are spared through the song *Happy The End*. Its crying melody brings Karen back to the piano where her music seemed to tell the best stories.

Our Harry, a folkish acoustic guitar ballad, shows Karen and Don intertwining an even more elaborate and sophisticated duo than previously done on *Revolving Man*. Its story is of a girl's brother who plans an overseas trip through the Peace Corps. She spends the last few days taking pictures and wondering how things will be without him.

Finally, *Go* entrances us with its spacey dream-like air, and *Spinning* pulses with its heart-beat melody, both songs more up-tempo than those on both previous albums. Karen's voice has also been altered to reflect a less powerful, but lighter girlish sound. Dennis Herring's production distributes less power to orchestration than before, and gives this power to the band's main instruments, thus making the music more musical and less artsy. *Glow* is the first marketable album for The Innocence Mission, but it is difficult to say whether this is due to the new producer, or to the newly inspired bunch of band members who are drawn to the fast upbeat world.

It is in no way accurate to say that The Innocence Mission have completely changed. They have still retained their ideals, their inspirations, and their artistic characteristics that have always made them who they are. Although they sound less like the have in the past, this album is still wonderfully crafted. It's only a pity that the chances of seeing them live in the UK are so minimal!

• Keith Abbott

The album's only other weakness shine very brightly. Comparisons comes with *Speak Our Minds*. Its be made to the likes of The Sund: inconsistency of a constant stable *Skin & Bones*. Its soaring v: beat leads to a feeling of "Is this it? melody, stormy electric guitar, Where's the rest?" This song is punching bass-line, make this son powerful on its own, but as part of the pleasure to hear. whole it doesn't seem to fit. Despite this *Speak Our Minds* manages to



The Innocence Mission: daydream believers

THE INNOCENCE MISSION: *Umbrella*. The Innocence Mission (vocals and instrumentals). *And Hiding Away; Sorry and Glad Together; Umbrella; Every Hour Here; Evensong; Now in This Hush; Beginning the World*; and five others. A&M © 75021 5362-2 (45 min), © 75021 5362-4.

Performance: *Mercurial*
Recording: *Good*

To appreciate "Umbrella" fully takes some patience. It won't attack you all at once; rather, it will seduce you over several listenings. You may fall under its spell, entering a hypnotic daydream of sounds and syllables, but you might just as easily be bored by its tendency to meander without highs or lows. The Innocence Mission's music falls somewhere between the languid folk/New Age meditations of 10,000 Maniacs and the dreamlike impressionism of Cocteau Twins. It's not as interesting or original as the work of either of those bands, but it does conjure up some intriguing atmospheres. Karen Peris's trancelike, le-

gato singing, the pianistic guitars, and the muted pulsing of the rhythm section combine in a mesmeric stream of consciousness in *Sorry and Glad Together, And Hiding Away, and Flags*. The group comes from a rural part of Pennsylvania, and it seems rooted in the good earth and able to translate that bond into music. There's also some elliptical self-analysis, with Peris revealing much about herself in a few words in the exquisite *Beginning the World*: "Always the same underdog stance under the same happy-sad sky, eternally crying, 'Am I still shy?'" Walt Whitman and Sylvia Plath would be proud.

R.P.

STEREO REVIEW OCTOBER 1991 95

And Peris has a stunning voice (halfway between Kate Bush and Natalie Merchant) and melodies to match.

Some of that was lost in an echoey mix at Cafe Largo, where the band opened a three-night engagement on Saturday, but the music, centering on Peris' gauzy keyboards and her husband Don's guitar, took on more dynamics than on the band's new debut album: a sound track for a dreamy day at the fair. The set was stinky (just 45 minutes) and perhaps a tad too low-key, but then it was just the band's first show of its first-ever tour.

Peter Himmelman—last seen doing "Hava Nagila" on the recent Chabad telethon with his father-in-law Bob Dylan and Harry Dean Stanton—proved more seasoned as a solo acoustic opening act, reporting, in his best songs, on his search for eternal truths in a transitory

The Innocence Mission (Borderline, Vol 7)

The dippy introspection and dreamy moods of the Mission's self-titled debut LP (A&M) fall somewhere between another airy throwback to '70s folk/hippy styles and the shy, pixie-like sensuality of Kate Bush, the Cocteau and Throwing Muses.

34 TIME OUT MARCH 7-14 1990

BackBeat

NEW RELEASES

INNOCENCE MISSION *Innocence Mission* (A&M)

Right now there seems to be a preferential hiring policy at major record labels — one that sees them all frantically signing up any female singer/songwriters or female-led group they can find. They're not doing this to atone for any past sexist sins, but for purely economic reasons. The left-field success of the likes of Indigo Girls and the vastly overrated Melissa Etheridge and Edie Brickell means that we can expect the early '90s to bring us lots of young things with sweet voices and sensitive songs. A case in point: Innocence Mission. This young Pennsylvanian group is dominated by singer/lyricist Karen Peris, whose style has already evoked comparisons to the likes of Kate Bush, Stevie Nicks and Rickie Lee Jones. The fact that Joni Mitchell's husband, Larry Klein, produced and the additional fact that Peter Asher (Linda Ronstadt, 10,000 Maniacs) is involved provide further clues as to where Innocence Mission is coming from, as do the hippy-dippy name and the information that Karen and musical partner/husband John met while in the cast of *Godspell*. There is nothing fresh or innovative here, but the combination of Peris' girlish voice and some nicely textured arrangements is a generally pleasant one. Expect this stuff to go over big with the clean-cut college crowd, but for music and lyrics with more muscle, stick to such female-led combos as 10,000 Maniacs and Throwing Muses.

Kerry Dools

world and imparting simple wisdoms between songs with an effectively offhand, jocular manner.

The fine pairing concludes its Largo stint tonight, while the Innocence Mission is scheduled to perform live on KCRW-FM's "SNAP" program Wednesday evening.

—STEVE HOCHMAN

LA TIMES NOV 20, 89

Innocence Mission: Dreamy Day at the Fair

Poetry—real poetry—is a rarity in pop music lyrics. But Karen Peris, of the young Pennsylvania quartet the Innocence Mission, writes with economical grace and romance harking back sometimes to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Mission possible

Popular band to release its long-awaited new CD

Jon Ferguson
Intelligencer Journal Staff

The windowless room on the second floor of a former factory in downtown Lancaster isn't any place you'd want to call home.

The plaster walls are almost bare, and the floor is disguised by years of grime.

Furnishings are spartan. Wooden chairs are haphazardly arranged, a drum kit sits on the floor and a standup piano is pushed against one wall. A handwritten list of songs is propped in one corner and a promotional poster for the album "Umbrella" leans at an angle.

This is where the four members of The Innocence Mission have spent much of the last three years. For those of you wondering whatever happened to this Lancaster rock band, you needn't have looked any farther than this rectangular room.

It is here that The Innocence Mission has shaped the 12 new songs by singer-songwriter Karen Peris that make up "Glow," the band's first album in four years.

A&M Records plans to release it on June 6. The label has already released a four-song EP that includes two songs from "Glow" ("Bright as Yellow," the first single, and "That Was Another Country") and two songs recorded in the rehearsal space ("Let's Talk About Something Else" and "Geranium Lake").

The band members have also been rehearsing for some live dates. They've already played two shows at

a Philadelphia club called The Tin Angel and they will perform at the Chameleon Club on April 21. It will be their first show in Lancaster since they played at a benefit for Habitat for Humanity in September 1992.

Since then, all of their performances have been private.

"We've played a lot in this room over the past three years, bringing songs in, trying to record them and work them out," said Don Peris, the band's guitarist and Karen's husband. "It's been a really good process, just in terms of strengthening that side of our playing."

"We really enjoy being with one another, whether or not we're getting a record finished. I think once you've been friends for so long, that's a factor in it, too. When your friendships grow stronger over the years, your playing grows stronger, too."

The Innocence Mission's lineup is completed by drummer Steve Brown and Mike Bitts, who plays bass guitar. The four graduates of Lancaster Catholic High School have been playing together for 13 years.

"This is not just a business relationship — at all," Brown said. "We share something a lot deeper than that. It's our understanding of music and our friendships. It can only grow. You can only understand yourself better through your relationships."

The band, which released its first, self-titled album in 1989 and its second, "Umbrella," in 1991, never planned such a long gap between releases.

They thought they had an album ready for release in 1993 when they recorded 10 songs in New Orleans with producer Keith Herring. But the quartet and their record company both came to the conclusion that the results were too slight for public release.

About a year later, the band packed up and moved to Seattle for five weeks to record more songs with Herring, who produced the album "The Real Ramona" by

Throwing Muses.

They took the best songs from the two sessions and settled on the dozen that wound up on "Glow."

"I think we enjoy playing and singing more than we ever did," Karen Peris said. "And the songs sound more emotional because of that. This album, I hope it sounds more like when you listen to it that maybe you're sitting in the room while we're playing."

"Glow" is an intimate album. The songs, buoyed by brilliant melodies and loaded with hooks, all have strong emotional pulls. Karen Peris' colorful lyrics are perhaps a tad more elliptical than on the band's two previous albums, but her songwriting consistently catches the listener up in its powerful current of emotions.

The songs on "Glow" are uniformly gentle, mid-tempo tunes that are expertly played and sung. Karen Peris' evocative voice is thrilling and her band mates are the perfect complement as they protectively wrap her delicate vocals in soothing, sympathetic sounds.

The songs are obviously deeply felt — by all of the members in the band. Musicians simply don't achieve this kind of organic sound unless everybody is reading from the same emotional page.

The Innocence Mission has always been about the original songs by Karen Peris. The songs are the glue that hold the band together.

"It's still so great to play the music," Brown said, "and create something that's never been. ... I never heard that before, you know. That is still the most important thing to me, to continue playing together."

"Next week Karen could get an idea and we could be playing music that was never even conceived of right now. That is exciting. That is really exciting."

The members of The Innocence Mission don't know what to expect of "Glow" commercially. Their first two albums didn't sell particularly well, but there has to be a place for a band this talented in the musical marketplace. There must be a crowd out there who wants some relief from the anger and angst that dominates much of the alternative music scene these days.

"When an album comes out, we really don't have

More GLOW on Page 19



The Innocence Mission, from left, Don Peris, Steve Brown, Karen Peris and Mike Bitts.



"Bright as Yellow," the latest Innocence Mission EP, is in stores already.

Cont, ...

A&M Shines The Light On Innocence Mission's 'Glow'

BY BRIAN Q. NEWCOMB

Karen Peris, the voice of Innocence Mission and its creative guiding light, asserts that the four years since the release of the band's last A&M album, "Umbrella," was anything but a hiatus. "I was writing songs the whole time," she says, "and we would just set aside the songs that we felt a strong attachment to, and I guess it just took awhile



INNOCENCE MISSION. Mike Bitts, Karen Peris, Don Peris, and Steve Brown.

until we felt happy with the whole collection of songs."

But that time has come with "Glow," which A&M will release on June 6.

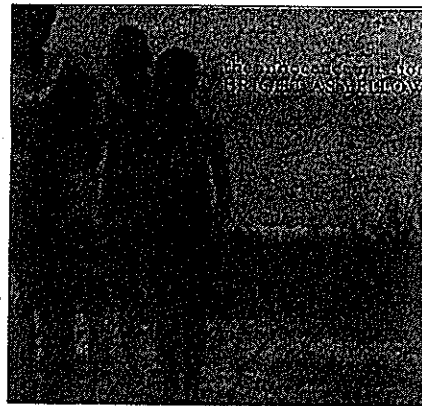
A&M director of product development Brad Pollak says that the label intends to be just as industrious about bringing "Glow" to the public.

"With Karen Peris and Innocence Mission, we're going down a very focused, extremely patient, and driven road," he says.

"We want to get the record into the marketplace slowly," he continues. "[Innocence Mission's] A&R person, Teresa Ensenat, came up with the idea of releasing a commercial [EP] to use as a setup tool, which would remind the marketplace that the band still exists without having to use the whole album."

To prep Mission-aries for the Lancaster, Pa., band's return, the label put out the four-song EP on Feb. 14. The release contained two songs on the new

(Continued on next page)



"Bright as Yellow," the latest Innocence Mission EP, is in stores already.

A&M SHINES A LIGHT ON INNOCENCE MISSION

(Continued from preceding page)

album, as well as two previously unreleased tunes that are not on "Glow."

A&M will work the EP to college and album alternative radio throughout May, until the release of "Glow."

Peris, whose gentle voice suggests that of the Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan, without the accent, is cautiously optimistic about the commercial response to "Glow." "It does seem that right now there is an appreciation for a lot of different kinds of music, and that's really nice for people who are writing music for people who love to listen to music. They're able to hear a greater number of bands and songwriters than they were able to a couple of years ago."

Pollak looks to the growth of album alternative radio as an opportunity for bands like Innocence Mission. "You have some sort of identifiable way of measuring how these great songs are doing," he says. "With Innocence Mission, we've always had that album alter-

native audience because they have gotten commercial alternative play; they certainly have had the college radio audience, and we believe they're positioned for top 40, if the crossover is right."

The key, says Pollak, is a slower approach: "What we're doing differently is focusing in stages, rather than focusing on what we can get simultaneously. This way, we'll have the proof to move from one step to the next. 'Bright As Yellow' is the song best equipped to do that three-hurdle jump from college to [album alternative] to alternative, but we're going to need a base, some good sales, and feedback from radio to take it to the next level."

Preparing for "Glow," Peris wrote on guitar as well as her trademark keyboards, and the band worked with a new producer, Dennis Herring. Pollak says, "They're not as slick as they might have been in the past. There's a

(Continued on page 42)

A&M SHINES A LIGHT ON INNOCENCE MISSION

(Continued from page 13)

much rawer feel to what they're doing. There are obvious signs of a songwriter who has developed, and it's more approachable in that it's been produced with more warmth."

For A&M, says Pollak, Innocence Mission is a vehicle for Peris. "We know that Karen Peris is as talented as talent gets," he says. "She's not pretending to be hip; she's an artist who believes strongly in her own vision of what a singer is, of what a writer is, or of what a lyricist is... There's something there, and we have to be patient about getting

people to see that. We have to approach this as if it is a new band."

For Peris, who's joined in Innocence Mission by her guitar-playing husband, Don, and longtime friends bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown, the goal is to keep writing and recording music. "The four of us enjoy playing and singing more than we ever did," says Peris.

The band will play select dates until the release of the album, which will be followed by an extended domestic tour.

BILLBOARD APRIL 29, 1995

Glow: The Innocence Mission

Continued from Page 10

any expectations for how well it will do," Karen Peris said. "So we're never disappointed that way."

Although they would certainly like a hit record, the band gives the impression that the numbers of albums sold really doesn't matter all that much as long as they are able to continue recording.

"I'm really satisfied, just the fact that we can still make records and we've been able to keep on doing what we've been doing," Bitts said. "I don't think that when we started I thought we'd be doing it this long."

They have other interests apart from the band. While Karen was writing, Steve Brown was learning the art of

cooking at the Log Cabin restaurant, where he has worked for the past four years; Mike Bitts taught piano and bass; and Don Peris taught guitar and worked at his carpentry.

But the band was never far from their thoughts.

"These are the types of things that we can do that don't take away from the band," Brown said. "This is always first. I plan to continue my relationship with cooking and everything, but that's still secondary."

"The band always comes first."

Except for their friendship.

"I think we feel our friendship in a stronger way now," Karen Peris said. "And we feel that more than ever when we play."

Cont... The Intelligence Journal →

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1995 19

The Innocence Mission wows hometown crowd

Tom Knapp
Intelligencer Journal Staff

REVIEW Music

It's been 2½ years since The Innocence Mission gave a hometown concert.

Their fans have not forgotten them.

The local quartet, which made a national name for itself before vanishing into a few years of creative seclusion, made a reappearance Friday at the Chameleon Club. For them and for many of the 400-plus crowd, it was a long-overdue "welcome back" party.

The audience, after hoppin'-boppin' to The Frogs earlier in the evening, settled back for some rock in a smoother, mellower vein.

They got what they came for, from the first notes of the popular "Surreal" on through a warm, crisp collection of old and new tunes.

"We're really glad to be playing at home again," vocalist Karen Peris said shortly into the show.

The crowd roared its approval. Karen looked like she might die of embarrassment.

The Innocence Mission has carved a niche for collective shyness almost as much as has for its music. Its members on Friday sometimes seemed unsure what they were doing on stage or why all those people were looking at them.

To everyone else, it was perfectly clear.

Karen, who supplements singing with keyboards and a guitar far too big for her hands, is the obvious center of attention. Her voice — clear, calm and sweet — soared through the crowd and over the rest of the band with delicate strength.

She greeted the audience's enthusiastic applause with bashful nods of appreciation and a Christmas morning kind of grin.

Sharing the stage and Karen's shyness is a trio of excellent musicians who play both energetic rock and subtle ballads with a potency that doesn't overpower Karen's waifish voice.

Guitarist Don Peris, Karen's husband, and bass guitarist Mike Bitts clung to the sides of the stage, trading grins as they played and trying hard, it seemed, to avoid meeting the audience's eyes. Drummer Steve Brown maintained a steady rhythm in the back.

All four kept smiling, happily wrapped up in the music.

Born as Masquerade in 1982, shortly after the foursome graduated from Lancaster Catholic High School, The Innocence Mission launched its national success story in 1989 with its first A&M album release. The self-titled freshman effort was followed in 1991 by "Umbrella."

More BAND on B-2



Intelligencer Journal photo by Suzette Wenger

of The Innocence Mission sings during the band's performance Friday at the Chameleon Club.

Although not platinum sellers, the albums and a national tour with Don Henley earned them a loyal following. A lot of people, perhaps tired of the anger, angst and lifeless bubblegum pervading the modern rock scene, were hooked by Karen's emotional lyrics and the band's gentle approach.

After a four-year hiatus, the band hopes to rekindle its fame with a third album, "Glow," which is due out in June. An EP sample from the new album was available at the Chameleon Friday; the full album will be unveiled at another Chameleon gig on June 15.

The performance Friday was a rhapsody of music, including familiar tunes like "Curious," "Paper Dolls" and "You Chase the Light," to just released numbers like "That Was Another Country," "Happy The End" and "Our Harry."

Obviously, the fans have been getting their money's worth from the older albums. Packed close to the stage, they welcomed each old song with enthusiasm, like an

old and treasured friend, often mouthing each word along with Karen. During new tunes they leaned close, absorbing the lyrics with rapt attention so they can sing next time.

"They've developed quite a following in spite of their bashfulness," Chameleon owner Rich Ruoff said during the show. "It's become their trademark."

Intelligencer Journal
4/22/95

the innocence mission
bright as yellow

couldn't wait:

Q101	WEQX	KCXX	KDJK
WFNX	WOXY	WDST	KERR
KEGE	WFNX	WQXA	

the first single from the new album glow



RECORDS

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Vol. 7.
Issue 45

HITS 7/17/95

The Innocence Mission

P.O. Box 1614, Lancaster, PA 17603 • (717)560-0150

June 28, 1988

Dear Friends:

This is an exciting time for The Innocence Mission as we prepare to record our first album for A & M Records. It looks like we will be recording either on the West Coast or in England. This will depend on who is ultimately chosen as producer.

Unfortunately this means we won't be performing in the area for quite some time. Your support in the past has been greatly appreciated and we would like to invite you to one of our last shows before entering the studio. Please find enclosed two complimentary tickets for our show at the 23 EAST CABARET in Ardmore, on Tuesday, July 5. We will be performing one set beginning at 10:30.

Thanks again, and we hope to see you there,

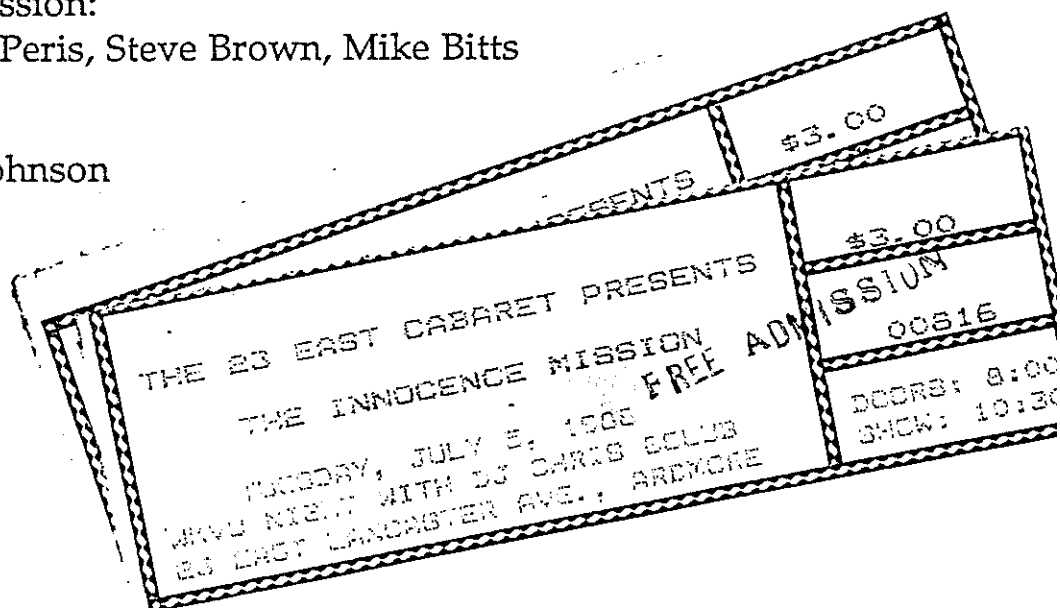
Sincerely,

The Innocence Mission:

Karen Peris, Don Peris, Steve Brown, Mike Bitts

Management:

Tim Landis, Jim Johnson



The Innocence Mission

P.O. Box 1614, Lancaster, PA 17603 • (717)560-0150

Dear Friends,

Greetings. During the past few months we have been searching for a producer to help us make our first record. Recently we decided on Larry Klein. Most notably, he has co-produced his wife Joni Mitchell's last two records. He has played bass guitar on Peter Gabriel's "SO", Robbie Robertson's latest release, Tracy Chapman's debut album, Don Henley's "Building The Perfect Beast", and many others. His attitudes toward music, his skills as producer/arranger, and his kind and understanding personality make him the kindred spirit we'd been looking for.

Larry is finishing up a project and will be able to start with us in late September. Until then, we continue to write and play. It's nice for us because we get to see you again. We will be recording in Bel Air, California, from October to December and won't be playing out again until sometime in 1989.

We'd like to thank you for your interest and good wishes. We look forward to seeing you during the next two months.

The Innocence Mission

Karen

Don

Mike

Steve

The Innocence Mission

With

THE OCEAN BLUE



Thursday, July 14
Ambler Cabaret

43 East Butler Pike, Ambler, PA • (215)646-4727

Doors: 8pm, Show: 10pm

The Innocence Mission



The T R O C A D E R O

Wednesday August 31 1 set beginning at 11:00 pm
with special guests: The Skam, The Darrows, and Room 4 3
10th & Arch Streets • Philadelphia 215-592-TROC



WINDY DAY

PICTURE

AS I CAN

SURREAL

BLACK SHEEP

I REMEMBER

COME AROUND

AMELIA

WONDER of BIRDS

BIG WIDE WORLD

? LOVE is LIVING?

Windy Day
Remember
Amelia
Black Sheep
Surreal
Wonder of Birds
Curious
Tiny Picture
Come Around
Love is Living

Big Wide World
Trials
Clear to You
As I Can
Happy Man
Schoolhouse
Shadows
Broken Circle
Both Sides
Giants

Amelia
Windy Day
I Remember
Black Sheep
Sunset
As I Can
Clear to You
Curious
Wonder of Birds
Flower Sky
Dove Is diving

Come Around
T. Picture
Ragbolls
Broken Circle
Happy Man
Trials
Schoolhouse
Shadows
Big White Wreck
Both Sides Now
Giants

THE INNOCENCE MISSION

JANUARY CONCERTS

THURSDAY JAN 7

THE AMBLER CABARET

43 EAST BUTLER PIKE
AMBLER, PA
(215) 646-8117

FRIDAY JAN 8

THE CHAMELEON

317 N. CHRISTIAN ST
LANC., PA
(717) 393-7133

WEDNESDAY JAN 13

THE CHESTNUT CABARET

SHOWTIME 10:00
PHILA., PA
(215) 382-1202

SATURDAY JAN 16

THE NORTH STAR

FAIRMONT SECTION
PHILA., PA

THURSDAY JAN 21

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

PHILA., PA

WEDNESDAY JAN 27

23 EAST CABARET

SHOWTIME :10:00
23 E. LANCASTER AVE
ARDMORE, PA
(215) 896-6420

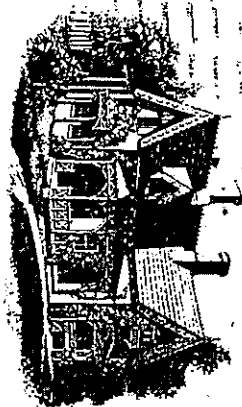
THURSDAY JAN 28

THE BAYOU

3135 K ST. NW
WASHINGTON, DC

The Innocence Mission

P.O. Box 1614, Lancaster, PA 17603 •
(717) 560-0150



THE INNOCENCE MISSION

Hello everyone. I hope that you've been well. Thanks for all of your good wishes and interest in the record. We're very happy with it and hope that you'll like it.

"Black Sheep Wall" is the first single and can be heard on Modern Rock and College radio stations. We've made a video for the song and it's currently being aired on MTV's 120 Minutes (Sunday nights 12-2 AM)

We're looking forward to playing at Chameleon on Thursday (Oct. 5). We'll be glad to see you there.

AM
411-2902

-Karen

The Innocence Mission

The Last Dates in 1988

September

Sun 25 **STREETBEAT • Radio Show • 10 PM**
93.3 WMMR FM • Philadelphia
Hosted By Cyndy Drue

Tue 27 **23 EAST CABARET • 10 PM**
WKVU Night with DJ Chris Golub
23 E. Lancaster Ave • Ardmore, PA

Thu 29 **CHAMELEON • 10 PM**
with Special Guest THE OUTRIDERS
223 N. Water Street • Lancaster, PA

Fri 30 **EMPIRE ROCK CLUB • 10 PM &**
Midnight Live Radio Broadcast on
93.3 WMMR FM • Philadelphia
Hosted by Joe Bonadonna
Princeton & Roosevelt Blvd • NE Philly

THE INNOCENCE MISSION



"For the last six months the music of The Innocence Mission has wafted through our house. I love this record. Of all the new singer/songwriters, Karen Peris is the most interesting to me."

Joni Mitchell

December 8 & 9 - 8pm
Theatre Of Living Arts

The TLA is proud to welcome **The Innocence Mission** back to Philadelphia for two very special shows, Friday and Saturday, December 8th and 9th. The band, who formed in Lancaster, Pa and gained their reputation playing in the Philadelphia area, are celebrating the success of their self-titled major label debut record. The record has already spawned a hit single and video for the song "Black Sheep Wall."

With influences ranging from the Beatles and Peter Gabriel to James Taylor, Paul Simon and Kate Bush, **The Innocence Mission** have discovered a sound that is at once hauntingly familiar and yet strikingly unique. The result is a record and live show that has found overwhelming support from critics and fans alike. Don't miss your chance to welcome **The Innocence Mission** home.

Tickets for all TLA shows
available at the Box Office,
334 South Street, noon-6pm.
Charge-By-Phone (215)922-1011

All Electric Factory Concerts
authorized agencies or
Ticketron.
1-800-233-4050

FOR INFO 976-HITS (25¢ PER MIN) ROCKROSSIP 976-7699 (49¢ LOCAL CALL)

The Innocence Mission

appearing
Thursday July 28th at the

North Star

3 sets beginning at 10:00 pm

27th & Poplar Streets Phila., PA
(215) 235-STAR

The Innocence Mission

SEPTEMBER 1988

- Sat 3 23 EAST CABARET w/ special guest So Sydney • 10 pm
23 E. Lancaster Avenue • Ardmore, PA 215-896-6420
Hosted by 93.3 WMMR's Pierre Robert & Buzz Barclay
- Fri 16 LASALLE UNIVERSITY • Free All Ages Show • 10 pm
BACKSTAGE in the Lasalle Union Building • open to the public
20th & Olney Streets • Philadelphia, PA 215-951-1371
- Sat 17 The NORTH STAR BAR w/ special guest Ed McKendry • 10 pm
27th & Poplar Streets • Philadelphia, PA 215-235-STAR
- Sun 25 STREET BEAT • Radio Show • 10 pm
93.3 WMMR FM • Philadelphia
Hosted by Cyndy Drue
- Tue 27 23 EAST CABARET • 1 set beginning at 10 pm
23 E. Lancaster Avenue • Ardmore, PA 215-896-6420
WKVU College Radio Night w/ DJ Chris Golub
- Thu 29 CHAMELEON • 10 pm
223 N. Water Street • Lancaster, PA 717-393-7133



1003 ARCH STREET • INFO 215.592-TROC

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31 DOORS OPEN 8:00 PM

**THE SCAM
INNOCENCE MISSION
THE DARROWS
ROOM 43**

FREE ADMISSION WITH THIS TICKET

You Must Be 21

Hi everyone,

We want to thank you for coming to hear us during our club tour and also on the Don Henley tour. Two days after the club tour ended we began a 10-week U.S. tour, opening for Mr. Henley. (We call him Mr. Henley.) We didn't have time to prepare a schedule for you. But we were confident that you guys have your fingers on the pulse of the concert world and we hoped you'd track us down.

We're very excited about our plans to begin recording again in October.

We hope that all of you are well.

Your Friends,
The Innocence Mission

P.S. Anybody want a T-shirt?
They look like this:

The Innocence Mission



100% Cotton, Pre-Shrunk, White.
Specify L or XL and include address.
\$16 per shirt (includes postage).
Send Check or Money Order to our
return address.

DAILY NEWS 7/14/95

SAN FERNANDO
VALLEY

CA

SOUND CHECK



The lyrics of the Innocence Mission — Steve Brown, left, Don Peris, Karen Peris and Mike Bitts — express simple, everyday joys.



AND HIDING AWAY (NOT!): Yes, kiddies, the parade of out-of-shape men wearing spectacles in PoMo land never ends. And where you find limbs that haven't seen exercise since they tried to skip sixth grade gym class, you're sure to find our fearless leader Ivana. Here the Queen of everything graces **The Innocence Mission** with her presence, and tries to assure Larry Klein that she isn't faking it when she says he's the **only** compelling board-man in the biz.

The Innocence Mission/"Glow"

Many of us have felt the simple pleasure of running to a lover's arms after a long day "in all the dim of five o'clock." Ditto for getting past the grief to accept the impossibility of a former relationship, feeling "that was another country." Yet, few pop lyricists communicate such common experiences as joy and serenity. Those who do so artfully (Bonnie Raitt, John Hiatt, Bruce Cockburn; more recently, Nick Lowe and Graham Parker) have the wisdom and directness of middle age.

More subtle and younger than any of them, Karen Peris — lyricist, singer and instrumentalist for the Innocence Mission of Lancaster, Pa. — has reflected on such moments for years now. "Glow," the group's third major-label LP, contains more of her delicate, sublime poetry. ★★★

— Faith Quintavell

HITS January 13, 1992

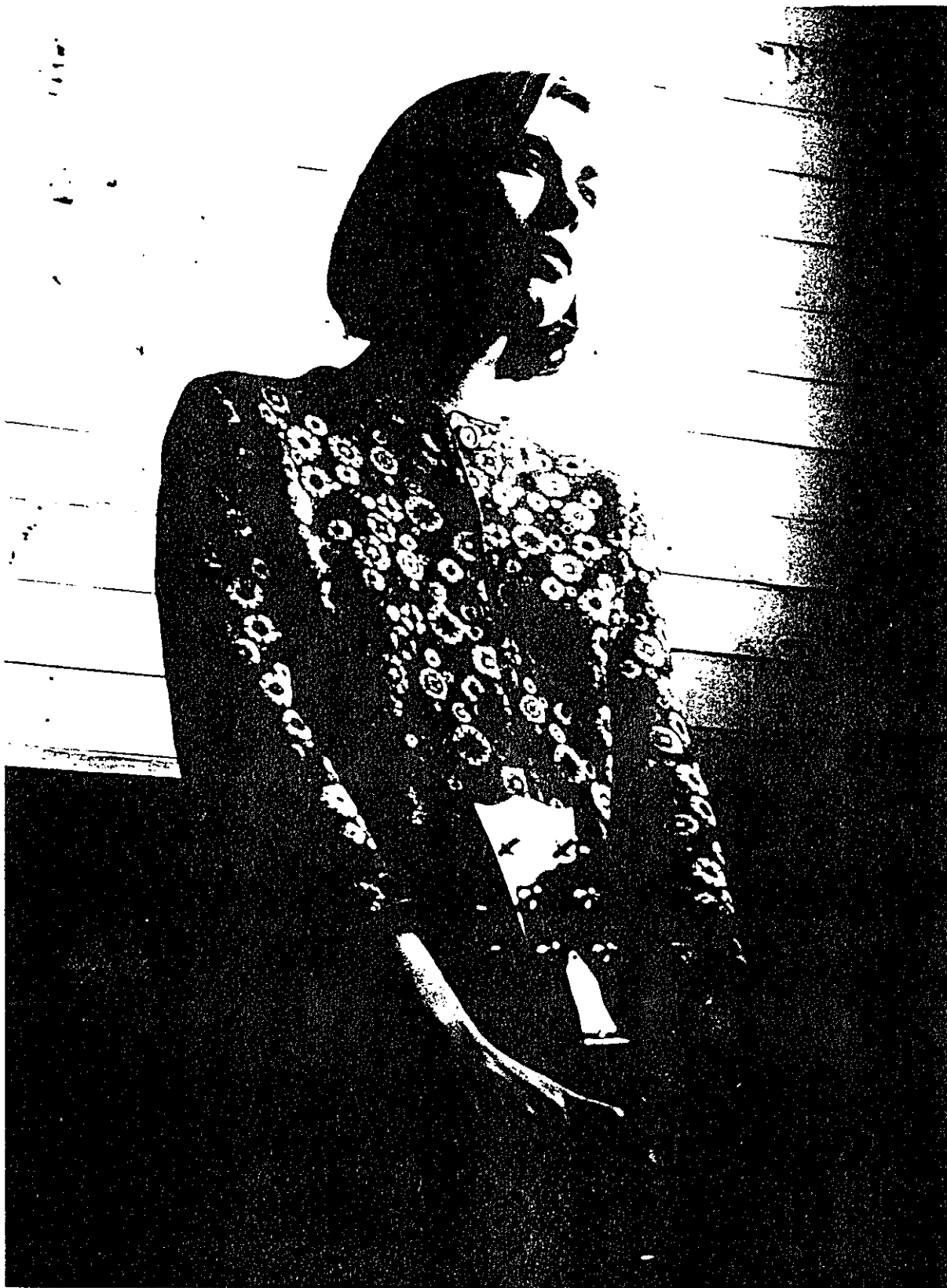
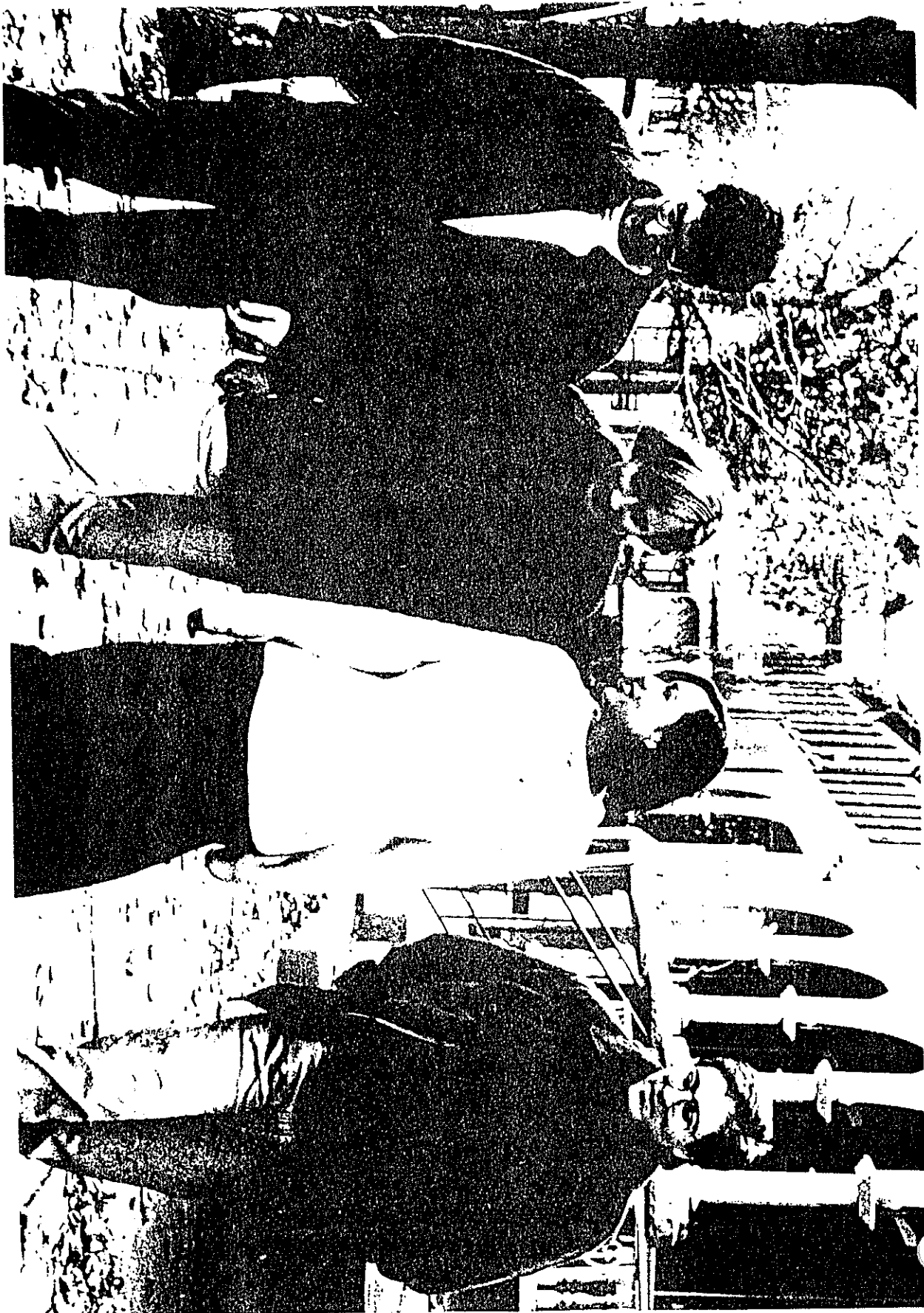


Photo: Dana Tynan 6/95

Karen Peris

THE INNOCENCE MISSION





Steve Brown

Don Peris

Karen Peris

Mike Bitts

THE INNOCENCE MISSION



A Man with a Mission

I remember not too many years ago that I could open up a page in *Goldmine* and see an advertisement for my favorite band in the world, the Innocence Mission.

Now, five years and two albums later (their third release, *Glow*, came out on June 6th) they are nowhere to be found here. Although, I admit that Relative Action does have their promo kit for sale, no other companies are following their lead. In the past, even the biggest companies listed here were offering IM material. Now, either they have them and think publishing their stuff would be a waste of money, or they have completely ignored the fact that this band is signed to a major label, A&M!

Please vendors, bring back the Innocence Mission! We love this band and there are plenty of us fans to sell to. Getting on my hands and knees begging ... PLEASE!

Keith Abbott
Richmond, VA
via the Internet
Sunday@Infi.Net

Goldmine Magazine

7/7/95

Nashville, TN 7/31/95

cont. → The Tennessean

Lancaster, Penn., musicians to Nashville today.

Its third record can also be said to be a bit *Brave*, one of the melodic folkie singles off the record that speaks of the spiritual glow the group is chanting about.

You go outside. You see the Holy Spirit / burning in your trees / and walk on, glowing with the same glow. / Still you tremble out and in.

"In *Brave*, it's just about the existence of anxiety and fear and daily life despite a strong faith. I'm questioning myself as to how I could be anxious sometimes in spite of my belief," says group inspiration Peris.

The new record represents a change in the group's outlook and sound, too. "Now we are all three or four years older, and we've had different experiences in our lives since then," says Peris, who penned all of *Glow*'s songs. Peris, 32, uses the powerful poetic lyrics she writes to transport listeners into the past and the future.

The third album's expression has a simple feel to it. The group's stripped-down acoustic sound, developed by Peris' husband Don on guitar, Mike Bitts on bass and Steve Brown on drums, resonates with a rawness not found in its previous two records.

"I think the instrumentation is a little simpler, but lyrically it is maybe more domestic in that the setting for the lyrics is usually in the

house or the backyard," says Peris. "It's important to me that the lyrics be visual and that they be clear to people."

In the mellow *Keeping Awake*, for instance, Peris' lulling voice over the simple guitar strums call up childhood memories of siblings and parents settling in for the night. You might picture TV's *The Waltons* as they lovingly ended the day.

"Songs often start out as the release of something personal. If you think about the universal aspects of your own experience."

Peris hopes to universally connect to listeners also through the sorrowful *That Was Another Country*. "Feeling the loss of a friendship. I think that's something that everybody has felt. Remembering a time when a friend was more present in your life."

Admitting that she feels particularly close to *That Was Another Country*, she says there's one other song that draws her in — *I Hear You Say So*. Although the song's positive spin is what she likes, there's more reason. "The four of us recorded it together just around one microphone, so it was a really fun song to record, and we were really happy to record it that way," she says.

Another affirming song off the record is *Bright As Yellow*, which praises individuals who have an inherent glow that naturally brightens our days. "I wanted to write about a quality I admire in people who aren't self-conscious. They can make others feel comfortable just by being themselves."

Influenced by musical groups from Simon & Garfunkel to the Red House Painters to 10,000 Maniacs, Innocence Mission members hope to be well-received by their audience whether they are playing new songs or old favorites such as *Surreal*, *And Hiding Away* and *You Chase the Light*.

"So far, people have been singing along to the new songs and the old songs," Peris says.

As to what reaction they expect in Nashville? "We've never played in Nashville. If people do come, that will be a nice surprise." ■

The Innocence Mission Home Page and Mailing List

Poetry and introspection are what the young alternative music crowd wants—when they're not in the mosh pit, moving along to Green Day, that is. The Innocence Mission has plenty of both. Memory and the creative spirit hold a special fascination for Karen Peris, singer/song-



The age of Innocence: Innocence Mission, that is.

writer for this Lancaster, Pa., quartet, which includes guitarist Don Peris, bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown.

In addition to images, press articles and a discography, fan Tony Bowden has compiled Peris' evocative lyrics on this World-Wide Web page—though when we checked, none for "Bright As Yellow" or other songs from the new *Glow* CD were available. Much of this info—including a FAQ that seems geared more to fans than newcomers—comes from the *Innocence Mission Mailing List*, which you can join here. Chat with fans, learn where to find live recordings and get the latest news and tour dates from the band's promoter. We found that not too long after we signed up, one of the members of the band even dropped in to answer questions.



Net Guide
Sept. 95

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Innocence Mission members walk down the streets of their town: downtown Lancaster, Penn. "That's where we get together to work on songs ... In an old warehouse building. It's nice that we can all live in our hometown and make music," says Karen Peris. Also pictured are: Steve Brown, left, Don Peris, and Mike Bitts.

INNOCENCE MISSION DELIVERS LONG-AWAITED ALBUM

BY ELIZABETH MUNDING
Staff Writer

Alternative music group Innocence Mission is glowing with joy these days over the release of its new album—and rightly so.

Glow, a follow-up album to the 1991 *Umbrella* disc, took four years to hit the record stores.

The group, led by Karen Peris, made a splash in the alternative music scene with its slick 1988 self-titled album. Although the quartet released *Umbrella* soon after, it did little to continue the buzz about the group. Innocence Mission's third effort was set to be released in 1993, but the group and its record company, A&M didn't feel it was ready.

Getting there

Innocence Mission performs at 8 p.m. today at 328 Performance Hall, 328 Fourth Ave. S., with the Catchers. Tickets cost \$10 at the door. Call 259-3288.

"We wanted to add some more songs," Peris says. "It was just going to be one [song], and we recorded five more songs."

Glow, a collection of 12 Innocence Mission tunes, debuted in June. Peris' dreamy voice, which has been compared to that of The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan, defines the group.



THE INNOCENCE MISSION

LANCASTER BAND RECEIVING CRITICAL ACCLAIM....

FEATURES
BLACK SHEEP WALL
WONDER OF BIRDS
YOU CHASE THE LIGHT

THE INNOCENCE MISSION

AM RECORDS

"To hear The Innocence Mission is to walk into a world full of wonder, love, hope and imagination. Once you're there, you won't want to leave." The self-titled first album from these Lancaster, Pennsylvania natives has presented to the world a sound that one critic called "stunning, intense, emotional and genuine."

The four musicians - singer/keyboardist Karen Peris; guitarist Don Peris; bassist Mike Bitts, and drummer Steve Brown were brought together in the early 80's while attending Lancaster Catholic High School. Their common interest in playing music and shared musical influences encouraged the band to start playing out locally but it wasn't until they played in Philadelphia that they started to take themselves seriously. "It was an inspiration to be able to gather our songs together and then know that we could go out and play them for people who appreciated them," says Don Peris. In December, 1987, Steven Rea, writing in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, praised Karen's "strong supple voice...the quartet's economical, inventive instrumentation, and...the sheer originality and emotional power of the songs themselves." At the same time, Eve Zibart in *The Washington Post* compared Karen's voice to "a Toledo blade; silver on steel, both shining and slicing and with a shivery quality in the higher registers that recalls the similarly visionary, pre-formula dolly parton...." The Innocence Mission wander lullingly through a child's garden of virtues.

The album was produced, for A&M Records, by world class bassist Larry Klein in Los Angeles. Larry's wife, Joni Mitchell, became aware of the band and their music during the recording sessions and said: "For the last six

months the music of The Innocence Mission has wafted through our house. I love this record. Of all the new singer/songwriters, Karen Peris is the most interesting to me."

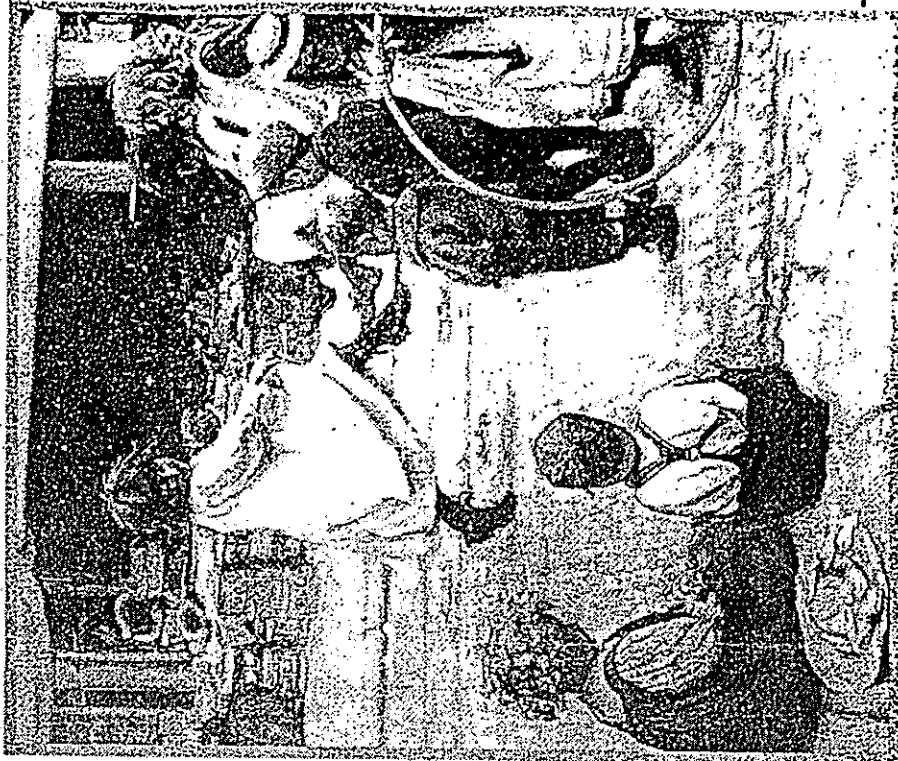
To be sure Karen Peris's lyrics are revealing. The family and faith are woven into many of the songs. "Black Sheep Wall", the first single off the record is a "brother and sister song", and "Medjugorje" was written around the time of her grandmother's death. The strong Catholic sentiment that runs through the band's work is not an accident.

Currently the band is in L.A. shooting their third video, with French director Eric Ifergan, for "The Wonder of Birds". Eric also directed the video to "If Remains After Me" which was recently featured on WGAL TV's *The Magazine*. The band also recently performed the song live on *Late Night* with David Letterman. The video of "Black Sheep Wall" was directed by British actor Adrian Edmonson of "The Young Ones".

The band will embark on a seven week headlining tour this month with scheduled stops in Pittsburgh on March 6th at Graffiti's, Philadelphia's Chestnut Cabaret on the 21st and home to end the tour at Lancaster's Chamberlain.

"Don and I always wrote our own music," says Karen. "But I don't think we ever imagined writing songs that people would actually hear! When you're from Lancaster, it feels like something from another planet, especially because at the time there was no local music scene at all. We were just really writing for our own pleasure."

Do yourselves a favor and pick up *The Innocence Mission* and the pleasure will be all yours. Innocence Mission is managed by Asher/Krost out of L.A.



pennsylvania musician



Vol. VIII #2 February, 1990

M A G A Z I N E



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Animal Logic at Club Met Feb. 12th
- Paradise Alley Monday Blues Nite
- Mechanicsburg's Paradise Nite Spot

ROCKS ON !!

• Coming to the Countryside Kody Lee
plus news, reviews and schedules for you!



INNOCENCE MISSION



THE OCEAN BLUE



SIRE reprise

COACH HOUSE
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

AUG 15 **LITTLE RIVER BAND**

AUG 16 **DOGSTAR** **SOLD OUT!**

THURSDAY!
AUGUST 17

THE INNOCENCE MISSION
featuring **KAREN PERIS**
16 HORSEPOWER

AUG 18 **JEFFREY JOHN BAND**

AUG 19 **AMBROSIA**

AUG 25 **SPYRO GYRA**

AUG 26 **TOWER OF POWER**

COMING ATTRACTIONS

8/27 CHRIS DUARTE	9/2 WILD CHILD
9/3 THE PUMSOULS	9/8 JOHN EASDALE
9/9 DEL AMITRI	9/12 LITTLE FEAT
9/15 AL STEWART	9/21 BLACK UHURU
9/28 ROBBERN FORD	9/29 BOXING GANDHIS
9/30 MICHAEL HEDGES	10/5 CHET ATKINS

10/7 "AN EVENING OF GUITARS & SAXES"
RICHARD ELLIOT - PETER WHITE
CRAIG CHAQUOT - WARREN HILL

10/14 BILLY DEAN - DAVID GATES

11/4 HIROSHIMA

12/26 B.B. KING

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The Best Food In Town... Buzz Magazine


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Fri aug 11 soul with full brass / acid jazz / funk & hip hop with
CAUSTIC • SOLAR SYSTEM
 dance grooves / dj MICHAEL SANCHEZ
 downstairs
TANYA SCARLETT & THE LAST MINUTE BAND
 DJANGO & YUSSI latin/gipsy jazz • NINETY ONE TALES

MANGO BANG
 latin funk & samboramba

KELLY SALLOUM
 jazz pop

SAT aug 12

SWEET BABY J'AI
 jazz blues
 eclectic-o-matic dj MICHAEL SANCHEZ

SUN aug 13 the wondermints on a lounge break
AFTER DINNER MINTS
HARVEY SID FISHER & THE 7 DEADLY SINS
BETH LAPIDES • **THE MONETS** • **MRS. GOD**
 with JULIA SWEENEY, BOB ODENKIRK, MERRIL MARKOE, HENRIETTE MANTEL, and
 DANA GOULD
DANCING WITH THE BOYS AND DJ EDDIE X

MON-aug 14
 an evening of intense ambient/new pop grooves
PJ OLCIN'S DUST • GRAIN • MOONTRIBE DJs

STACEY DEAN CAMPBELL
 Columbia Records
NOBLE GROVER

LIMPOPO
 crazy russian folk 'n roll
STEVE'S MAIN SQUEEZE
 songs for the accordion
LAWRENCE LEAN • DOG PARTY
MARLEE MCLEOD • BRUCE SMIRNOFF comic

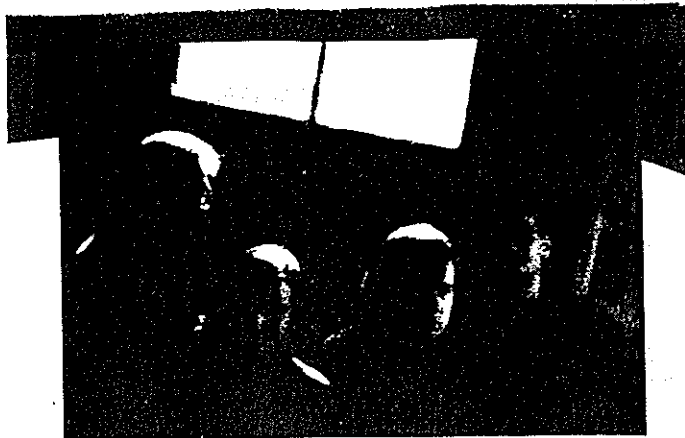
wed aug 16
 atm recording artist and dreamy pop purists
THE INNOCENCE MISSION

VALENTINE'S REVENGE • BRENDAN LYNCH alternative r&b
DOC THARI funk rock with bett helm & jennifer batten
 (M.Jackson's bombshell guitarist)
PRETTY FUNNY WOMEN
 discovery recording artist & irish folk rockers
THE CATCHERS

thu aug 17 pop music with
BERORAH GEE • SUNGLASS YORTOISE
CAT B'LUES new blues
WEST COAST THEATER ENSEMBLE
 "A Grand Night For Singing" songs by Rodgers & Hammerstein

COMING SOON

aug 18 LILL HAYDN • JULIE RITTER • 16 HORSEPOWER
aug 19 SON MAYOR • CIRO HURTADO • HOUSE BREW
aug 25 SUPERSESSION with ANN MAGNUSON
FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTINEZ • BLACK VELVET FLAG
sept 1 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS sept 25 JAI UTTAL august 28 ACETONE • SPAIN

665 N. ROBERTSON • WEST HOLLYWOOD • OPEN FROM 6:30
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INNOCENCE MISSION: Color Me Impressed

Who says color therapy is a bunch of New Age hokum? Certainly not Lancaster, PA's prescient Innocence Mission, which titled its latest A&M outing *Glow* and purposely tinted yellow its vintage photograph of five '40s ladies swinging from strange suspended barrels. Color figures into singer/songwriter Karen Peris's image-laden lyrics as well, especially in the lilting, Natalie Merchant-ish first single, "Bright As Yellow." So when Peris sits down for a recent discussion about the disc in the restaurant portion of LA's Luna Park, it makes perfect sense that she would inadvertently choose the one yellow-tableclothed booth in a sea of white linen. Realizing with a start that she's done this, she rolls her eyes, turns slightly red, and starts giggling in embarrassment. "I know, what does it all mean?" she sighs, anticipating the first question.

The "Glow," according to Peris, is what's captured in the mugs of those boisterous barrel-swingers, who resemble a bunch of WACs training for some surreal tunnelling assignment. "Or maybe it's girls on a field day, or maybe it's just a bunch of friends," she offers. "But the back cover is one of those faces enlarged, just to see her smile. And color is a way to describe the emotions, a way to visualize them, and yellow is just a vibrant color." "I do not want to be a rose/I do not wish to be pale pink/But flower scarlet, flower gold/And have no thorns to distance me," Peris sings on "Yellow," in phrases as lovely and lissome as her haunting Lorelei trill. And yellow isn't necessarily her favorite color, she adds. "But because it's so vibrant, it's a way to describe people who aren't self-conscious at all, people that can walk into a room and instantly make others feel more comfortable. I'm not envious, but I'm in awe of that kind of person."

Oddly enough, the mouse-shy Peris—who speaks in a near-whisper and often stares at the yellow tablecloth while answering—will roar like a lion when her group takes the Luna Park stage later that evening, confidently strumming her big acoustic guitar through jangly *Glow* fare like "Brave," "Keeping Awake," and a particularly invigorating version of "Bright As Yellow." A brilliant cover of the old Judy Collins hit "Both Sides Now" ends the chiming show on a chiming note, and the crowd cheers the Innocence Mission for several stomping minutes. Clearly, Peris just walked into the room and made everyone feel more comfortable. How? As she'd said earlier, "I think a lot of people who are shy, inside are maybe really gregarious. But they just don't know how to show it."

—Tom Lanham

"BRIGHT AS YELLOW" BY INNOCENCE MISSION APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

CMT-Sept 5

Lancaster, Pennsylvania's INNOCENCE MISSION has been together for more than twelve years. On its latest album, *Glow* (A&M), the chemistry between the band's four members is as potent as ever. The band says it strives to recreate states of consciousness of "Bright As Yellow," vocalist Karen Peris says, "I wanted to write about a quality I admire in people who aren't self-conscious. They can make others comfortable just by being themselves."

NEW MUSIC
CMT

VOLUME 25
SEPTEMBER 1995

The Concert Guide 8/95

With Mazzy Star's grace, The Sunday's lackadaisical bluebird vocals, The Smiths' intricate guitarwork and Frente!'s melancholy pop bent, The Innocence Mission have returned with *Glow* (A&M), a glitter-pop-and-then-some-amalgamation which like *Umbrella* (1991) and major-debut *The Innocence Mission* (1989) before it, is a lavish aural jaunt. Native Pennsylvanians' Karen Peris (vocals/keyboards/guitars.) Don Paris (guitars/organ.) Mike Bitts (bass/vocals/vibes) and Steve Brown (drums/tambourine) strive to weave the perfectly bittersweet, pure, organic instrumen-

tation, lulling vocals and introspective lyrics. Anyone who's witnessed The Innocence Mission's mellifluous performances will testify they always succeed. *Glow* with The Innocence Mission Thursday, August 17 at the Coach House, SJC.



Thu 17 - THE INNOCENCE MISSION IS HERSPOWER / HINGER

Their latest album for A&M Records, *Glow*, captures this band's synergy and ability to create palpable atmosphere's of emotion with words.

TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



PRIMUS

ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
PRIMUS	Tales From The Punchbowl	Interscope
PRIMUS	Post	Elektra-EEG
CATHERINE WHEEL	Happy Days	Fontana-Mercury
TO EA TENDO	Electr-O-Pura	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Songs Of You & Me	Caroline
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Are You Driving Me Crazy?	Touch And Go
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Five Ways Of Disappearing	4AD
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Scars From Falling Down	Slash-London
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Wowee Zowee	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	A Northern Soul	Vernon Yard
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Psychic Hearts	DGC
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Nemesisters	Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Lucky Dimples	EastWest-EEG
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Red Medicine	Dischord
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Incidental Music 1991-95	Merge
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	I Should Coco	Capitol
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Magnosheen	Hollywood
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	The Future Of What	Kill Rock Stars
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Olympian	Atlas-A&M
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Music From A Sparkling Planet	Bar/None
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Kojak Variety	Warner Bros.
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Blonder And Blonder	Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Tigerlily	Elektra-EEG
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Slow Note From A Sinking Ship	Merge
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Batman Forever	Atlantic
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Drugstore	Honey/Gol-London
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Wammo	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	I Am An Elastic Firecracker	Island
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Panama	Interscope
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	My Wild Life	Zero Hour
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	God Of Love	Maverick-WB
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Amor And Language	Drag City
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Short Bus	Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Interstate	DGC
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Long Division	Vernon Yard
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Insomnia	Dischord
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Chocolate Synthesizer	Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Forever Blue	Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	You'd Prefer An Astronaut	RCA
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Experimental Remixes (EP)	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Allen Lanes	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Soda Food	Crypt
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Sparkle And Fade	Tim Kerr-Capitol
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Fun Trick Noisemaker	spinART
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Masquarade	Island
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Let Your Dim Light Shine	Columbia
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	The Bands	Capitol
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Engine Takes To The Water	1/4 Stick-Touch And Go
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Glow	A&M
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Milktrain To Paydirt	Homestead
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Fast Stories... From Kid Coma	Capitol
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	The Bradley Sutra	Elektra-EEG
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	100% Fun	Zoo
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Tribute To A Bus	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Such Friends Are Dangerous	Kill Rock Stars
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Live Transmissions From Uranus	Homo Habilis
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Deep Six	EastWest-EEG
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Gone Glimmering	Matador
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Yes	Rykodisc
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Thunderhead	Elektra-EEG
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Move Back Home	Lookout!
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	A Stable Reference	Kranky
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Only Everything	Mammoth-Atlantic
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	A.M.	Sire-Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Jerk Of All Trades	Go-Kart
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	...Rocks Your Lame Ass	London
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Nerdy Girl (10")	No Life
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Red Hot + Bothered (10")	Kinetic/Red Hot-Reprise
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Boys Life	Crank!
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Elastica	DGC
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Reloaded	Medicine/Giant-WB
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	4-Wheel Vibe	Caroline
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	To Bring You My Love	Island
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	Can We Go Home Now	Rykodisc
PRINCE & NEW POWER GENERATION	The Dirt Of Luck	Matador

#49 →

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 40 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college radio and commercial stations. Top 75 releases are the 75 most played releases that week.

Time for Peris when she sizzles with Innocence Mission's Karen Peris by Geoffrey Welchman

LANCASTER, PA-based

Innocence Mission's third album

is finally coming out, after a gap of four years, and "Glow" (A&M) proves to be positively luminous.

Singer/songwriter/keyboardist

Karen Peris and her guitar-

playing husband Don, along with

bassist Mike Bitts and drummer

Steve Brown, offer another

soothing collection of tunes that

ponder issues of closeness, inner

strength and family ties. Don's

simple, Edge-inspired guitar

lines support Karen's breathy

whispers, and with subtle

support from the rhythm section,

the album is sure to hit the spot

for fans of dreamy alternarock.

Staunchly denying she's the

10,001 maniac, Peris recently

found herself trapped in a burning building with longwinded HITS contributor Geoffrey "Beane" Welchman, who held her feet to the fire, gave her a grilling, and generally got her glowdown before being banished to burn in linguistic hell for mixed metaphoric conceit.

"It does seem like there's more diversity now in what's being played on the radio."

I was wondering about the length of time since the last album.

It was actually finished last August, so it has taken a while to be released. We recorded in the spring of 1993 in New Orleans and we intended to do the whole album, but when we were finished, we wanted to add some more songs. It seemed incomplete. So I took some more time to write and we finished it the following spring.

Tell me about how you chose your producer, Dennis Herring.

He's a wonderful guy. When we were making our second album ["Umbrella"], we heard the Throwing Muses album "The Real Ramona" and we just loved that record; how emotional it felt and how exciting the songs were. So we got in touch with Dennis and had a long conversation about music, and asked him if he would work with us.

Where are you coming from musically?

I always listened to a lot of Simon & Garfunkel and the Beatles, and I still return to those albums more than anything else. But there's a lot of new music, too — the Red House Painters albums I really love, and 10,000 Maniacs. A band called the Bats, from New Zealand, and the Sundays, too.

In your lyrics, there's often a strong feeling of family, as if you were writing with someone in mind.

I'm often thinking of Don, my husband. I know,

with the last song on the album, "I Hear You Say So," I was thinking of my younger brother because he was moving away from home at the time. I was thinking of the kind of things that might be running through his mind. The song "Keeping Awake" is based on memories of growing up and hearing my parents' voices as I was going to sleep.

There's also a Harry mentioned in two different songs. Are they modeled after anyone?

I don't really know anyone named Harry. In "Our Harry," that's an older brother — not necessarily one in my family, but an older brother of the person in the song. In the song "Spinning," I was singing to Don, but Harry is just a great name to sing.

Your lyrics seem to go out of their way to avoid attacking your subjects, even when you have painful feelings about them.

I often write from a place of being unsure of myself, so sometimes I'll be angry at myself in a song, but I don't feel a need to express anger at others. Sometimes there's a longing in the songs to be more like the people I admire... to do more, to be a better person. Some people will say our music is melancholy, and maybe it's because of that longing, but there's also an underlying hopefulness. I never want my lyrics to be whiny or self-pitying.

You fill your songs with wonderful visual imagery.

That probably comes out of an appreciation of visual art, and always trying to write the lyrics so that I can visualize them.

Your arrangements seem to employ the piano in a textural way. Rather than whole parts, you'll have single notes or chords ringing out.

That was a way to allow more space in the songs. We tried not to have them cluttered up too much, to keep the instrumentation pretty simple. I played a lot of organ in some of the songs, which I hadn't done on the other albums, and I guess the piano parts kind of drift in and out. In "To Be There," the piano part reminds me of "Peanuts."

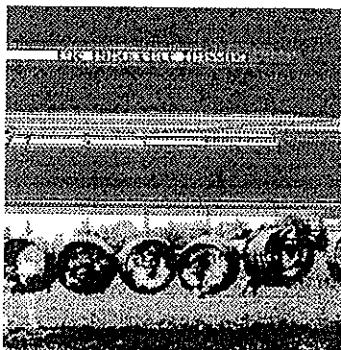
[Laughs] Great! That's my favorite piano music... the Charlie Brown Christmas album. Your band emerged in a pre-alternative music world. Do you think the changes in the market will benefit you?

It does seem like there's more diversity now in what's being played on the radio. There are some AAA stations that remind me of what college radio used to be like — and still is, to some extent. I've been able to hear a greater diversity of bands and songwriters than I would've a couple of years ago. As far as commercial alternative stations, I don't think we ever have any expectations of a song of ours being played on mainstream radio. That would be a nice surprise. I guess we'll just have to wait and see. ♦



music

contents help about us contact us



REVIEW: The Innocence Mission, *Glow* (A&M)

- Jon Steltenpohl

It's been a long wait since 1991's *Umbrella*, but The Innocence Mission has finally returned with their third album, *Glow*. Like their first two albums, *Glow* is a quiet collection of hauntingly beautiful songs. Fans who feared the demise of this precious band will be glad to note that Karen Peris and the rest of the band have simply been taking their time until the right songs developed for a new album. And even though the past four years have been hard on their fans, *Glow* is certainly worth the wait.

The Innocence Mission shares a musical bed with 10,000 Maniacs, The Cowboy Junkies, Shelleyan Orphan, and The Katydids. Like their peers, the band sets itself apart with personal lyrics, engrossing vocals, and music that is both subdued and passionate. Karen Peris' vocals are truly unique. They have a soft, atmospheric quality that gently embraces as if you were resting on a cloud. Sonically, Peris adds her trademark keyboards and some acoustic guitar to the chiming guitar of her husband, Don Peris, and the fluid bass and percussion of Mike Bitts and Steve Brown. The sonic mix they produce softly lifts and swirls in gentle musical eddies.

And while the music alone is moving and vibrant, the lyrics take you a step further. Karen Peris' songs unfold themselves like dusty, faded letters recovered from an attic box. They are swirling, blurred snapshots of years past. A picture may tell a thousand words, but each short lyric offers much more than a simple picture could ever contain. Like the best of poets, Peris' verses are an economy of words which reveal a wealth of history and emotions. It is this depth which catapults The Innocence Mission beyond their peers.

The only unfortunate twist to The Innocence Mission's music is that it isn't very radio ready, and similar bands like 10,000 Maniacs have had to wait many years to get any airplay. Still, that doesn't change the quality of *Glow*. It is a quiet, simple daydream of melodies which fall around you like a warm blanket on a cold night. One listen to Peris' vocals and you'll fall in love with The Innocence Mission. So, don't worry if you haven't heard about the band yet, go and give The Innocence Mission a try. It will be worth it.

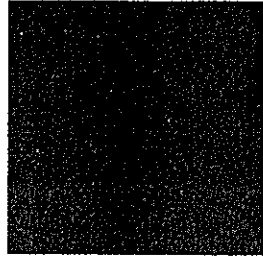
contents help about us contact us

music

That Much More Enchanting

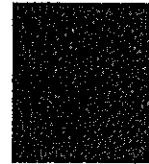
■ ["Keeping Awake" \(356K WAV\)](#) | [RealAudio](#) | [About RealAudio](#)

■ ["I Hear You Say So" \(241K WAV\)](#) | [RealAudio](#) | [About RealAudio](#)



The Innocence Mission: *Glow* (A&M)

Soon after the release of their first album, this aptly named Pennsylvania band got what seemed to be a huge break: they landed the opening slot on Don Henley's 1990 tour. The name should have steered them away. Henley's "End of the Innocence" tour almost proved to be the end of the Innocence Mission, as it forced Karen Peris to belt out her subtle, ethereal



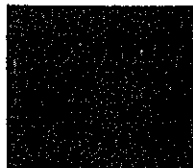
melodies for arena-sized audiences hankering to hear "Hotel California," dude.

Hopefully, they won't be stuck in that position again. With their third album, Peris and company have created a gem that reveals new facets on each listen. While it lacks the heart-on-sleeve emotionality of their eponymous debut, *Glow* is more focused, both sonically and thematically. Dennis Herring's production is warm, but the arrangements are sparse, centered around the washy and sustained but nonetheless carefully constructed guitar parts of Karen's husband, Don Peris. With its memorable wailing vocal hook and wiry tremolo guitar, "Bright As Yellow" is a standout, but nearly every song displays individual charms. "Speak Our Minds" bursts forth with bright rhythmic energy, while "Happy, The End" recalls the languorousness of The Blue Nile.

Throughout, Peris again proves herself the most believable member of the school of childlike singers that includes Natalie Merchant, Shawn Colvin, and Julianna Hatfield. Because her songs are hazy, somewhat melancholy vignettes written from a young girl's perspective, her winsome vocals make them that much more enchanting. Musically, she writes in a well-defined harmonic and melodic language, but surprises abound, from the keening major sevenths of "Brave" to the unexpected shifts running through "Keeping Awake." On the last song, "I Hear You Say So," the intimate, resolving harmonies sound like the stuff of a traditional '60s folk-rock ballad. But just as Peris seems ready to conclude the album on a conventional note, the song stops dead; we're left hanging, but also teased to rediscover *Glow's* many delights. --**Bob Remstein**

If these opinions don't look right to you, go work out your feelings in Group Therapy, the

Mr. Showbiz



starwave

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they do have potential for a slot on the second volume of the *Friends* soundtrack album right between Paul Westerberg and Lou Reed. And if *My-So-Called Life* is ever resurrected, there might be a spot on that soundtrack also. That's not necessarily a bad place for them to be, though. *Happy Nowhere* has all the right arrangements and textures needed for dog's eye view to follow in Counting Crows' big footsteps, but the hits seem to be missing. Peter Stuart, the heart of the group, apparently had good intentions, and he was helped along by Adam Duritz of Counting Crows and co-producer James "Jimbo" Barton (Eric Clapton and Kate Bush), but the album doesn't have any really striking moments. The opening track, *I Wish I Was Here*, is probably not a conscious blending of Counting Crows' *Round Here* and Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here*, but it sounds like Stuart sampled Duritz's delivery of the word "here" directly from the Crows' own hit. There is also a bit of actual sampling at the end of *Waterline*, a song about his father who died when Stuart was just a kid. The song fades out with his father singing *Frankie and Johnny* and accompanying himself on the guitar. *Bulletproof and Bleeding* was inspired by the insensitivity of talk show hosts and audiences towards their guests, and it, as well as some of the other songs, shows Stuart's genuine concern for his neighbors on the planet. The one persistent problem is that the music itself just isn't very moving. This introspective record may not go gold, but dog's eye view is definitely working to succeed. The band fashionably spells its name with all lower-case letters, and fashionably recorded the music in a haunted house in Woodstock. --Jameison Clem

GLOW

Artist: The Innocence Mission

Label: A&M Records

Rating: *** 1/2 (out of five)

It's a mood everybody is familiar with. You've had tests all week, you've overdrawn your checking account, you don't get paid until next Friday, you found out that girl in your German class has a boyfriend, and you've got to go to work in an hour. By themselves, none of these disappointments would be cataclysmic. Together, though, they can cause a melancholia that has only one remedy: laying supine on the couch and listening to some mellow yet uplifting melodies. If you ever find yourself in this state of mind at the end of the week, then the Innocence Mission's new album *glow*, may be just what you need. This Lancaster, Pa., band's latest album is filled with delicate melodies, shimmering guitars, and songs that will get you out of the doldrums in time to dive into the weekend. All the music is punctuated by lead singer Karen Peris' almost childlike voice. The primary songwriter and overall driving force behind the band, Peris pens lyrics exuding a certain sense of security. These songs deal with the safety of things familiar: home (*Keeping Awake*), a lover's voice (*I Hear You Say So*) or a favorite aunt's house (*Speak Our Minds*). One unique device used by Peris in her songwriting is the creation of apparently fictional recurring characters. On *Speak Our Minds*, the main character and her friend paint Aunt Mary's kitchen. Harry joins the Peace Corps in *Our Harry* and shows up again in *Spinning*. A woman named Georgia and another, Aunt Ruthie, appear in some of the album's other songs. But the lyrics aren't the only part of this album that makes you feel all warm and fuzzy inside. The rest of the band effectively achieves the same effect with the ethereal guitar work of Don Peris (husband of Karen) and reserved beats, courtesy of drummer/tambourinist Steve Brown. *Bright as Yellow*, the album's first single, features a Mazzy Star-like slide guitar. The strength of the song rests on its entrancing bridge, which beautifully melds into the chorus. Also striking are the dissonant piano chords on *Happy, the End*. If, after two or three listens to *glow*, you're not floating in the clouds, or at least a few feet from your ceiling, maybe you need something hard-core mellow, like Pink Floyd. But then again, if you're that far gone, maybe all you need is a refill on your lithium prescription. Unless you're just catatonic, this disc should do the trick. -- Brent Oldbury

 The
 Innocence
 Mission



brings ethereal rock down to earth
 on their new album

By: Chad Stephenson

After fourteen hours on the road from Seattle, six hours of sleep and two radio interviews in different cities north of San Francisco the same day as the show, when The Innocence Mission arrived at the Great American Music Hall's seedy Tenderloin digs, they could still look in awe at the golden ornamented interior where they would play that night. Singer/songwriter Karen Peris could still exclaim softly, "Wow. What a beautiful building."



"Speak Our Minds"

(30 second .aiff audio file ~650k)

From their debut in 1988 through today, The Innocence Mission's repertoire has been songs of beauty and sadness. Songs about France in the 1800's when artists were chasing light, of black sheep brothers in families, and of elderly people in convalescent homes waiting for visits and trying to remember who they were through an Alzheimer's haze. And of spirituality, God, and the likes of divine apparitions as signs of hope. It was rock music touched by heavenly keyboard sounds, guitar doused with echo and reverb reminiscent of playing in a canyon or church, lordly drums and a melodic bass which sang. Heavily layered and complex arrangement of vocal lines via help of producer Larry Klein brought fresh beauty to a funk-laden landscape that would soon be replaced with grunge. Today, with a new producer, the music departs from complexity and makes a case for simplicity.



Karen Peris will deny current influences have changed the style of The Innocence Mission as of late. She will say she listens to current bands--Mazzy Star, the Sundays, and the Red House Painters--and that she likes them all. But, she says, they haven't changed the core of what she writes. Instead, these groups seemed to have opened a place for them to finally break into, given The Innocence Mission a new arena for an audience. After all, before the Sundays there was The Innocence Mission.

Bringing up the new single, "Bright As Yellow," Karen alludes that they "wanted the tambourine to be louder than the drums. So we'd go on listen to Mazzy Star and say, 'That's what we want it to sound like!'" The popular choice as the single to release the new album, it doesn't clearly determine the Mazzy-L.M. connection for the rest of the album. See the word: voice. Re: a change from the past.

Where once were multi-tracked, call and response echoes of her voice, now comes an almost live to two-track feel. More clarity was the goal: "Four years has gone by. The only conscious difference in my singing is that Dennis (Herring), as our producer, wanted the lyrics to be more understandable and clear," says Karen. "Going back and listening to the old records, I think the singing is pretty lazy and the lyrics are kind of hard to decipher; [Dennis] felt it made the lyrics sound half-hearted, like I didn't really care about them. That was a good challenge for me."

What the band terms "open-space" is in the new songs--less keyboards, the focus is on guitar and voice, drums and bass taking a near-nebulous backseat. "I used a practice kit from the garage," says drummer Steve Brown. "It sounds great, but much softer" replacing the bold, thunder that powered the beat behind older songs like "Revolving Man," "Wonder of Birds," or "You Chase The Light."

Lyricaly, Peris finds her inspiration stemming from the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop ("the tone of her poems is conversational--I like that"), Josephine Miles, Eudora Willey ("do you know her book?"), Elizabeth Bowen, and E.M. Forester. And Emily Dickenson? "I'm not really as interested in her as I should be," she smiles.

And the birds of all your yellow teenage days, and you know this hymn,
Remember, knowing what you do know, still you tremble not and lie,
You see how I go to places, that I'm trying on the ground like the sky is so
Heavy when I could be brave,
Oh I know it, I know it, how is God beside, I want it, I want it I'm sure
of that, but the sky is tall and heavy, when I could be brave, brave.

"Brave," words by Karen Peris, ©1995

Lyrics since the first album have become more direct, pointedly inward toward an inner landscape rather than an external one. She says, softly, that an important key for her is that songwriting extend from something personal. "I really do think that when you are writing about yourself you're writing about everybody, to see how your own experiences extend into other people's lives and how much experience is universal." She gives a nod to reading, that the one thing she has always loved about it was "how you feel the sense of being part of a larger family." And, to her writing, that inner life reflects an inner belief in God, part of being Catholic.



"I think, actually, Catholics have had a hard time expressing their faith, and so they are pretty quiet about it; at least that's the way I grew up."

Is she comfortable talking about religion with strangers? To interviewers?

"I feel comfortable, but it's difficult to put into words."

"I think that it's at the center of my life, and it's underlying," she says. "It's probably apparent in a lot of our songs because I never set about to...well..." she pauses, "see?" She gazes at me, "I'm really not doing a good job of explaining, just because it so hard to put into words."

is

Talking about it in relationship to her songs seems to make things clearer. "I think in the songs where I mention God by name, it's out of discipline and of myself as a believer, of needing to call my attention to it, to be aware of my own failings. That's a sort of tension that's been good for me to express." She pauses deeply again, but seems trapped trying to put her faith into words, as though it won't fit. "But it's not like I really need to be reminded...it's just to sort of...get myself on track better."

Growing up with Catholics, I tell her, I never knew them to have the view of God as benevolent. He seemed more like a parent--looking over your shoulder all the time, trying to catch you. He seemed to like seeing people do penance, I say. She goes back to the beauty she sees in it.

"I think that there's a great sense of reverence in the language of the Mass and I always found that to be very beautiful and not threatening at all. And maybe some people have had a bad experience with the Church or a priest not doing a good job in relating the joyful aspects of their belief." And she looks down, sadly, as if it was true, but shouldn't be so.

But it gave her gifts for her life. It was in Catholic school in Lancaster ("Lan'c'ster" she pronounces it), Pennsylvania where

she learned to play guitar in the school's liturgical performance group. It is in that school where she met her husband, guitarist Don—in the school musical. He has been friends with bassist, Mike Bitts, since Cub Scouts and they've all remained in Lancaster until this day. She and Don live in small, two-story brick house in a suburb of town where she says she writes songs sometimes at the piano, sometimes in an empty room upstairs on the hardwood floor. All of them travel with their families on the road which, in today's music world, is a rare sight. I figure it must put a lot of strain on them.

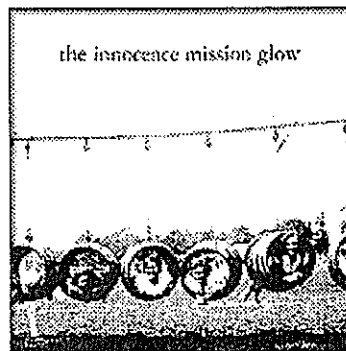
"I really couldn't do it otherwise," says Karen, "I always say I write songs for myself, but Don's music is a big part of recording with the band." The ring on her finger gleams. "I feel really grateful: I get to travel with him and to write songs and record with him. It's a great happiness for us."

As we sat under the victorian age beauty of San Francisco's the Great American Music Hall, we talked music gossip and of how the band's new video for "Bright As Yellow" was filmed a few days ago. In it, black and white Super 8 film footage of people at the Statue of Liberty was projected on a wall behind her as she sang; a young girl chasing butterflies and laughing is there too, behind them and projected onto their faces. Now, across from me, she speaks softly about her town, of how it is an important part of life for them and their music. And as she tells me this, I see her life as the projected images that were shown behind them in the video. Of how the past is contained in clapboard and iron bridges, in the late afternoon light and maple-leaved sidewalks of the Fall. And she says, "It's nice that we have a lot of favorite memories from that time."

Article and Photography: ©1995 Chad Stephenson .

Markup & Design: ISS.

Audio sample from The Innocence Mission's *Glow* courtesy of A&M Records



Glow

A&M Records

Did you ever have to wait for 3 & a half years for a CD from one of your favorite bands to come out, only to wonder what the heck they were doing during that time when you finally hear it? Well, if you have, & if you're an Innocence Mission fan, then you oughtta be sickeningly relieved.

Before I start, I want to use this review as an opportunity to say that Hershey, Pennsylvania seems to have a wonderful music scene. The music put out by the 'Mission, Ocean Blue, Riverside, etc. is some of the most textured, beautiful, & just plain joyous pop that I have ever heard, & the Innocence Mission's GLOW is no exception

If you really enjoyed IM's first two records, & thought the only thing they were missing was a little something to really fill out the sound, (i.e., more acoustic guitar or piano) then you should really dig this record.

Basically, every song is nearly perfect. Karen Peris still stands as one of the best songwriters anywhere. She just must be one of the happiest & most optimistic people on the face of the planet. With songwriters everywhere writing in very cynical fashion, it's so refreshing to hear an outlook like her's. In "Go", she sings, "...and you would thin now hope would be tired, but it's alright..." It's lines like that just make you feel, well, good about life.

As it was with IM's first two records, Peris sings about everyday things & makes them seem so beautiful. Lines like "You go outside, you see the Holy Spirit burning in the trees & walk on, glowing with the same glow..." & "Oh my own true friend & I, we walk to Mary's & speak our minds..." just seem to give me the impression that Peris has taken a hold of the life that God has given her, & sees it as something worth appreciating.

As before, the musicianship is superb. These are some of the most wonderfully placed & executed songs that have ever crept into my jaded ears. The combination of the great musicianship, perfect structure, & Peris' gorgeous voice makes for one the most moving & emotional releases that I have ever heard. Do yourself a favor & buy this disc. End of sermon.

--Tree Voigt--

Morella's Forest

SUPER DELUXE

Tooth & Nail Records

First of all, I want to say that Morella's Forest is NOT Star Flyer 59 with a female vocalist. I have heard a lot of people describe their sound as such, & I personally think that it sells the band short. Sure, Morella's Forest does the same shoegazer/noise pop/fuzz rock style as Star Flyer, but they definitely do a better job of living up to their potential.

After picking up their 5-song indie cassette, BASS, I fell instantly in love with them. Being a big fan of the music of My Bloody Valentine, Medicine, Slowdive, Cocteau Twins, etc., I always find it a pleasure to find this style creeping into Christian music, & Morella's Forest is among the best out there.

Two songs from BASS, "Lush of Spring" & "Oceania", were included (and improved upon) on the record, along with 8 new songs. The result is 42 minutes worth of some of the fuzziest pop tunes around. Songs like "Wonder Boy" & "Puppy Luv" bleed with a fuzz that makes you wonder if your speakers are screwing up on you, while the mix of pure, nasty noise & vocalist Sydney's beautifully drony voice on "Glowing Green" & "Curl" will make your head spin. None of this takes away from the fact that the band write some great pop songs. Although you can rarely tell for sure what the heck Sydney is saying, she usually lets in enough intelligability (note to Ryan: If you can think of a better word that means the came thing as "being able to tell what she's singing", feel free to replace "intelligability") on the chorus for us to sing along.

The production on this disc is excellent. Steve Hindalong & Chris Colbert (The Prayer Chain, Luxury, etc.) are quickly becoming two of my favorite producers. This disc is just really LOUD, allowing for everything to come in clearly, while still making those HUGE guitars the number one priority. This is, in my opinion, the best record put out by Tooth & Nail thus far. (This is coming from a big fan of Luxury & Star Flyer 59.) Add to the incredible music some really groovy art by Tom Wolfe, (Chatterbox, Circle of Dust, Everdown, Under Midnight) & you have the one of the best noise pop records to be put out by anyone up to this point. Look for the band on tour with Star Flyer soon. (Go fig...)

---Tree Voigt---

Glow

Rocket Sept 95

Karen Peris writes sad, beautiful songs that manage to convey a sense of hope in the midst of sorrow or disappointment, and she does this without sounding maudlin or sappy.

Peris finds little heartbreaking things that everyone has experienced and shows the importance that they have at that moment. She can get the essence of an action and record all of the emotions that surround it, like going off to school or watching a loved one drive away. When these things occur, they're the entire world. It's impossible that life will continue without that cookie, but somehow it does.

"Peris' voice is frail and lovely, more refined than Natalie Merchant, more restrained than Elisabeth Fraser. With this voice and her lyrics, it's natural to focus on her even though there's a whole band involved. The rest of IM is too good to be given mere backing-band status. Intricate, subtle guitar work and occasional keys layered over solid, flowing bass and drums. These same 4 people have been together since 1989, and judging from their track record, I don't think they're capable of putting out a bad one.

AFTER HOURS: BAND SHINES WITH 'GLOW'

Harrisburg Patriot, 6 October 1995

Members of Innocence Mission have come a long way since graduating from Lancaster Catholic High School more than a decade ago.

The foursome is outshining many other alternative bands with the release "GLOW." Their black and white video "Bright As Yellow" was recently featured on MTV's 120 Minutes.

And as it gears up to accompany Natalie Merchant on her national tour, which kicks off this week in Washington, D.C., the band's efforts will be spotlighted further.

Merchant left the 10,000 Maniacs two years ago at the peak of the band's popularity. She is touring in support of her first solo album "Tigerlily."

While no stops are slated for the mid-state, the tour includes an Oct. 13 date at the Tower Theatre in Philadelphia.

"GLOW" is the third album by singer/keyboardist Karen Peris, guitarist Don Peris, bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown in their multirecord contract with A&M Records.

Members of Innocence Mission quickly made a name for themselves on the midstate club scene. The band's first effort, "Tending The Rose Garden," was released on an independent label in 1989. It wooed fans throughout the area with visual lyrics that were filled with hope, wonder and imagination.

Peris' voice mars Innocence Mission debut album

THE INNOCENCE MISSION

The Innocence Mission.

A & M Records.

By SANDE CHEN

THE FIRST THING ONE NOTICES about The Innocence Mission is that Karen Peris' voice is very high and has the potential to become as annoying as Kate Bush's. Unfortunately, she's the only vocalist for the band. She also writes all the music and the lyrics.

Beyond her voice, though, there is some merit in her music. There is good chordal progression and harmonization, unlike some bands who know only one chord.

"Paper Dolls," the first song, opens The Innocence Mission's first album delicately, until Peris starts singing. Then, it begins to sound like a small church choir with stupid lyrics. "Black Sheep Wall," the first single, on the other hand, is actually enjoyable, although the beginning of it sounds like a symphony orchestra tuning. "Curious" is in the style of The Indigo Girls and if "Clear to You" were a bit faster, it could be The Ocean Blue.

For the most part, the music is well-written. "Broken Circle" and "You Chase the Light" incorporate piano nicely. In particular, "Mercy," "Wonder of Birds," and the sweeping "Notebook" are very good.

Some of the lyrics are trite. However, in all 13 songs there is substance. Peris writes truthfully about emotions, the ways to love and fear at the same time. Each song is written in first person, thereby conveying a strong personal testimony. They are lengthy and show depth.

In general, if one can stand Peris' voice, this is an impressive debut for The Innocence Mission. Otherwise, the album soon becomes very grating.

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This story was originally published on Tuesday, April 24, 1990.

Volume 110, Number 21

The story was printed on page 10.

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Folk-rock musicians on a Mission

Pa. band's getting closer to success

The Washington Times, October 1

Thomas D. Sullivan

Two weeks ago, the musicians of the Innocence Mission brought their pretty folk-rock sound to a club in Alexandria. Tomorrow and Tuesday, they'll play for a much bigger audience here, opening for Natalie Merchant at the Warner Theatre.

The crowd at the Warner will hear Karen Peris' delicate, soaring voice and her husband, Don's, intricate, driven guitar, supported by the bass guitar of Mike Bitts and the drums of Steve Brown.

The band is always on the same page, and little wonder - its members have been playing together since 1986. They met at a Roman Catholic high school in Lancaster, Pa., years before that. And Mr. Peris and Mr. Bitts go back even further; they were Cub Scouts together.

The troupe's name seems to reflect this sense of home. "The mission in the name is a place to us, as opposed to a crusade," Mrs. Peris told the Los Angeles Times in 1990. "The name is just something I thought of one day, and we liked it," she says. "It made me think of the giant houses in children's books where you might find a refuge."

The lyrics Mrs. Peris pens are about simple but essential things - family sorrows and joys and how life can surprise and disappoint.

For example, on the first track of the band's new album, "Glow" (A&M Records), Mrs. Peris sings "Keeping Awake," about the comfort of being home at night and hearing the voice of a sibling (or a parent - one isn't sure). As Mrs. Peris sings of this, her voice climbs the crescendos of her husband's shimmering guitar chords.

Mrs. Peris' songs are born out of her experiences - but the lyrics aren't strictly autobiographical. "Often I'll just write about my own experience in an imaginary context," she says, "just because . . . it helps me to see how my experience might be connected with someone else's."

That imaginative distance helps because "it reveals something to me that a really black-and-white, concrete description might not. If I were to write about my own life in sort of diary form, I don't think that would reveal anything new to me about what I'm expressing."

Mrs. Peris doesn't want to spell everything out for listeners - including the Catholic faith she and her band mates share. Their vision of life emerges subtly in indirect ways in their music, as a serene undercurrent.

The singer doesn't want to preach or point her finger at anyone else's shortcomings: "I'm always aware of my own failings," she says. "I certainly don't feel qualified to talk about other people's failings."

The Innocence Mission is primed now to take on bigger audiences. Richard Ruoff, owner of the Chameleon Club in Lancaster, says the band's sound has been refined over its three albums.

Mr. Ruoff, who has watched the band play at his club since 1986, sees improvements in their performance, too: "Karen is not quite as shy as she used to be. . . . I think she's more comfortable performing."

Those who saw the band's shows at the Birchmere in Alexandria in April and last month could see some evidence of a greater confidence: Mrs. Peris isn't as shy about looking at the audience as she used to be.

Mr. Ruoff's club is the ground zero of a remarkable musical explosion. Four bands from the Lancaster area have national recording contracts, most notably Live, which has sold 3.8 million copies of its "Throwing Copper" album.

Two other Lancaster bands, Suddenly, Tammy! and Ocean Blue, have recorded albums on national labels. Mrs. Peris loves the music of those groups and counts their members as good friends.

Does she see any link among them because of their shared hometown? "I don't know how much where we live has to do with the music that all of us make," she says. "The mystery of places I haven't been sometimes makes me want to write as much as places I have been."

When Mrs. Peris says that she and the band are "really honored" to be asked to open for Miss Merchant, it might sound a bit arch, but that's not so. In person, her graciousness is obvious. Mrs. Peris says she's moved by the singing and songwriting of Miss Merchant, who has launched a solo career after fronting 10,000 Maniacs.

After the show at the Birchmere, Mrs. Peris and the band met their fans - dubbed "Missionaries." Both Mrs. Peris and her husband seem genuinely curious about what their listeners say.

The band will tour with Miss Merchant this month. As for their future, Mr. Ruoff says, "If they can get that one song that breaks, I think they can have a steady career."

Mrs. Peris is focused on other matters. Asked about the emotions she's trying to express in her music, she says, "I think there's always a longing to put into words things that there are no words for."

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California News

JAMES RYAN

United Press International, December 15, 1989

At first glance, Innocence Mission looks like a band that might feel more comfortable entertaining at a church social in their native Lancaster, Pa., than a hip audience at a Hollywood night club.

But as soon as lead singer and keyboardist Karen Peris's first shimmering notes slice the smoke-filled air, it's clear that this evening will be full of surprises. That angelic, quivering voice might even be taken for Kate Bush or Stevie Nicks.

And although Innocence Mission counts such British groups as the Beatles and Cocteau Twins among their important influences, their roots are decidedly American rural, lending a rare grace and charm.

The rock quartet first started playing together at Lancaster Catholic High in 1982. Three years later, they got serious about their music and started pursuing club gigs in Philadelphia.

After graduation, Peris attended Penn State briefly and then nursing school, where she stayed just long enough to write the class song.

"I had to come back when they graduated because I was the only one who knew it," she said. "All of us went to college because we thought if music didn't work out, you have to have a career to fall back on. None of us finished."

The lack of academic degrees in no way means a lack of intellectual curiosity, however. The band members are avid readers, and many a literary theme ends up as the germ of a song.

"Reading puts you in that frame of mind for making your own pictures," said Peris. "It's not like television or movies where they give you the pictures. It makes you see things."

Among the unusual selections on their self-titled debut album are "You Chase The Light," inspired by a story about a French working class woman in love with an Impressionist painter; "Mercy," a meditation on the afterlife; and "I Remember Me," the lament of Anna Anderson, the woman who claimed to be Anastasia, daughter of the last Russian czar.

"She was a really interesting person to write about—that situation of just trying to claim your identity and having your family not recognize you for political reasons, that was really hard," said Peris.

Family is another theme in Innocence Mission songs. "Curious" captures a family's dinner table fascination with a brother's new fiancée. "Come Around And See Me" is told from the perspective of a lonely elderly woman and "Black Sheep" is about a wayward brother.

Peris herself is the second youngest of six siblings. Even when her song ideas are based on fiction, "I can imagining them happening," she said.

"If you come from a big family, all those things that go on every day, you don't really think about how interesting they are until you look back," she said.

Peris shares songwriting chores with her guitarist husband Don. She usually visualizes characters in a scenario, much like a novelist or short story writer, to come up with lyrics.

"That's one nice thing about the lyric form, it's not very intimidating," she said, comparing it to writing stories. "It can only be so long, and it can't be very wordy because you don't want to take away the feeling of the melody."

Among her favorite authors are E.M. Forster and Willa Cather, who take her back to less troubled times. "I have trouble relating to most of the characters in contemporary fiction," she said.

Don Peris finds their recent notoriety both strange and exciting—the last heavy-duty dose of glitz that hit Lancaster was five years ago, when Harrison Ford and Kelly McGillis came to film "Witness"—but he said it's a struggle to deal with the avalanche of advice.

"We never had that sort of influence before," he explains. "This person liked it, this person thought maybe this could be better. We're trying to keep all that out of our mind ... to go back to writing strictly for ourselves."

One senses that the band is alternately intimidated by the hype they find in New York and Los Angeles, and excited at the prospect of meeting fans and seeing more of the world.

"It's getting built up here and there, there's a lot of malls and outlets going in, but there's tons of farmland and rural settings," Don said of Lancaster County. "It's one of the most beautiful places ... well, I haven't seen that many places, but I like it the best so far."

"I always liked the idea of traveling," said Karen, "so I don't think that bothers me. Actually, it's easier to play for people you don't know. When we were playing in Philly, especially as time went on, it would just be the same people every night and it would just become too intense.

"So it's nice to go to a place where you don't know anyone in the audience, but they know the record."

■ [Articles](#) □ [Innocence Mission](#) □ [Tony](#) □ [QUB](#) □ □ [comment](#)

Faith, curiosity and chiming guitar

The music of the Innocence Mission

By Tom Popson

Chicago Tribune, February 9, 1990

There's at least one place that Don Peris, guitarist for the Innocence Mission, would like to visit that won't be on his band's current American tour itinerary.

Peris would like to spend some time in Medjugorje, a village in Yugoslavia where six children said they saw the Virgin Mary in 1981 while they were tending sheep on nearby hills.

"It's an amazing thing," says Peris of events in the village, which became a religious shrine visited by tens of thousands in the years following the reported apparition. "At some point, I might go over there. I've always been fascinated by Fatima and Lourdes and Guadalupe, those visitations. Growing up in the Catholic Church and Catholic schools, those things have always fascinated me.

"I just believe it can happen. The fact that it's happening in this day and age, in this century, when things seem so far removed from anything like that. . . . When any sort of miraculous happening occurs now, I think people are very skeptical. But at one point, I don't know if they would have been."

Peris' interest in Medjugorje is shared by his wife, Karen, vocalist, lyricist and keyboard player for the Innocence Mission. On the band's new album, "The Innocence Mission," there is in fact a song titled "Medjugorje," a short piece that contains the lines "Mother Mary, Mother/ Filling up this place/ With hope and peace."

"That song was primarily inspired by the appearance of the Blessed Mother to those children," says Peris. "Karen's grandmother was really devoted to the Blessed Mother, and the day Karen and I were writing the music to that song, Karen's mother came to the door to say that her grandmother had died. So Karen just finished the song and dedicated it to her grandmother."

Married almost four years, Don and Karen Peris grew up in Lancaster, Pa., and attended Lancaster Catholic High, which is where the Innocence Mission came together in 1982 with the addition of bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown.

A town of some 59,000 residents, Lancaster is still surrounded by a lot of open country, says Peris - although he adds that there has been a good deal of building activity there in recent years. Anyone who has heard the Innocence Mission's music - airy, chiming-guitar, folk-tinged songs ranging from quiet reveries to medium rockers - might naturally wonder if the open environs of Lancaster had anything to do with the open feel of the band's music.

"I don't know," muses Peris. "It is very quiet where we live and rehearse. We live on the outskirts of the city, and we rehearse in a studio in a barn out in the country that's completely surrounded by cornfields. The barn is owned by an older lady who made it a studio a long time ago for the local TV station, which has since moved out. She's really cool: She rents it to us for next to nothing."

Like many other bands, the Innocence Mission - which appears Friday at Cabaret Metro - began its career playing cover versions of other performers' songs. The band went dormant after Don and Karen Peris and Mike Bitts entered college. But eventually the lure of performing became too strong, everyone bailed out of school, and in 1986 a revived Innocence Mission - still based in Lancaster, as it is today - began playing original material in nearby Philadelphia.

One of the places the quiet-spoken Peris and his band were booked into was a biker bar, which seems, to say the least, a little inappropriate.

"A lot of times, we had no idea what the places were like when we got the bookings," says Peris. "But we always went through with it and played. It ended up being a really good night. Earlier that week, we had played at a lot of churches - youth sings in church basements. It was quite a contrast."

Eventually signed by A&M Records, the band spent eight months, off and on, recording its debut album. Since its release, Karen's singing - supple, strong and capable of a notable purity on high notes - has been likened several times to that of Kate Bush, while the unusual phrasing she sometimes employs has brought comparisons to Rickie Lee Jones.

"In one sense, it's incredibly flattering because Karen and I like Kate Bush's singing," says Peris. "But at the same time, I think Karen, I think anyone, would like to be known for her own singing."

While a couple of songs on "The Innocence Mission" LP - including "Black Sheep Wall" and "Clear to You" - had been in the band's repertoire since 1986, most were written after the band signed to A&M, says Peris.

According to Peris, about half the band's songs have been written completely, words and music, by his wife, while he collaborated on the music for the other half. The imagery and ideas in Karen's lyrics, he says, often are inspired by something she has read.

"Both Karen and I read constantly," says Peris. "She goes for E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf and a lot of writers from the past century. I like Charles Dickens best of all, especially 'Bleak House.' I rarely read contemporary authors, although I just finished 'A Prayer for Owen Meany' by John Irving."

On the other hand, adds Peris, some Innocence Mission lyrics are drawn from personal experience. "Come Around and See Me" was inspired by Karen's grandmother, says Peris. And "Curious," which consists largely of a family's speculations about "our dear brother's" fiancée - "She comes from London/ We think that is so romantic/ Maybe she's distantly related to Di" - was the result of Karen growing up in a large family, says Peris.

"Karen gets a lot of inspiration from her family," says Peris. "She has six brothers and sisters. 'Curious' wasn't drawn entirely from her family, but I think she could easily imagine it happening."

■ [Articles](#) □ [Innocence Mission](#) □ [Tony](#) □ [QUB](#) □ □ [comment](#)

Missionary work among the faithful

Tom Lanham

San Jose Mercury News, 11 August 1995

Color therapy: Stress-relieving placebo or New Age hokum?

Karen Peris - the poetic leader of Lancaster, PA., folk-popsters the Innocence Mission - will tell you there's something to it. Color, even the everyday hues of tree leaves in autumn, can instantly lighten your mood if you let it.

That's why the black-and-white cover of "Glow" - her group's third and latest release from A&M - was tinted an eye-catching yellow. And it's why first jangling single, "Bright As Yellow," draws metaphors from a painter's palette.

And it's perhaps also why Peris, wandering through a sea of white tablecloths in the dining room of the Luna Park nightclub, chooses to sit at the only booth adorned with yellow linen. After realizing what she's just done, the singer blushes and starts to giggle.

"Colors are a way to describe emotions, a way to visualize them," says Peris in a whisper. "And yellow is just a vibrant color. It was a way to describe people who aren't self-conscious at all, people who can just walk into a room and immediately make other people feel more comfortable."

Rehearsal time

These outgoing folks are "not thinking about themselves at all - they're not intimidated by any self-consciousness or shyness," she says. "But I think a lot of people who are shy on the outside are maybe really gregarious inside, and they don't know how to show it. Maybe they would *like* to be a warm, vibrant person, like the people they admire."

In the next room - Luna Park's intimate concert hall - Peris's guitarist/husband Don is strumming through the first moody chords of "Bright as Yellow" for an afternoon soundcheck. (The track is currently in heavy rotation on Bay Area alternative stations; the band will play San Francisco's Great American Music Hall this Tuesday).

Curtains up

That evening, his wife dazzles with a confident, lissome reading of the song; she hits every arching note of the chorus, chiming away on a big acoustic 6-string. Other enchanting "Glow" numbers follow - "Brave," "Keeping Awake," "Speak Our Minds" - and a rousing cover of "Both Sides Now" ends the show. The Perises - sided by bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown - work that house like seasoned pros. How can this woman be shy?

A fresh-faced 31, Peris wears no makeup, her hair parted politely to the middle, and often pauses a full minute before answering a question in tones one must strain to hear. It's the same sensitive-librarian persona that Natilie Merchant rode to fame in 10,000 Maniacs, whose classy, intellectual approach to folk is nicely echoed in "Glow."

"I don't know if I'd describe myself as a wallflower, but there is this strong desire that I have to be gregarious," Peris says. "And I always have that in mind, I'm always trying."

Peris, searching for a handy reference point, settles on the "Glow" artwork, which features five young women suspended in barrels and - judging by their grins - enjoying every minute of it.

"And it was their faces that we liked especially, and just the whole spirit of the photograph," she said. "We wanted a photo that would sort of describe the word 'glow,' in the sense of an inner glow. We found it in an archival book of photographs, and it looks like it's from the 40s. It's a girls' school field day or maybe it's just a bunch of friends."

Beyond the sense of color and gentle acoustic and electric balance, there's a genuine warmth to the record that borders on the spiritual. That's no accident, says Peris.

The spirit moves her

The four Missionaries met at a Catholic high school in Lancaster, and have continued to attend church into adulthood, not exactly hip behavior. So when Peris penned the "Brave" lyrics "You see the Holy spirit burning in your trees/And walk on, glow-ing with the same glow," she knew she was taking a risk.

"But in our songs, my beliefs are not expressed in an evangelical or preaching way - they're expressed in a personal way," she says, dismissing any ideas of rock 'n roll corrupting her. "It's not hard to keep our faith strong - I don't think anything could shake it, because it seems like faith is rewarded with sureness in what you believe."

"But it's always hard to be a good follower of God, just because your self gets in the way, thoughts of yourself and what you have to do today. And it's even harder when you're touring."

"Glow" - produced by Dennis Herring - took more than four years to record. Naturally, this placed a yoke of Catholic guilt firmly on Peris's shoulders. "I spent so much time writing these songs, I felt like I should be doing something really important," she frets. "And I usually sit down and play (she prefers piano and bass guitar) very day, so whatever I'm feeling that day will become a part of the song, like some kind of tension, some kind of longing ... or even happiness."

Now what?

The Innocence Mission - on the brink of stardom after 12 years - isn't happy?

Peris gulps, then giggles. "No, no! I have really happy life, and a wonderful husband and family! But usually songs come from a place of longing or melancholy, you know? 'I feel great' - that's just not as satisfying as expressing some kind of tension or disappointment with yourself."

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Peris' voice mars Innocence Mission debut album

THE INNOCENCE MISSION

The Innocence Mission.

A & M Records.

By SANDE CHEN

THE FIRST THING ONE NOTICES about The Innocence Mission is that Karen Peris' voice is very high and has the potential to become as annoying as Kate Bush's. Unfortunately, she's the only vocalist for the band. She also writes all the music and the lyrics.

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"Paper Dolls," the first song, opens The Innocence Mission's first album delicately, until Peris starts singing. Then, it begins to sound like a small church choir with stupid lyrics. "Black Sheep Wall," the first single, on the other hand, is actually enjoyable, although the beginning of it sounds like a symphony orchestra tuning. "Curious" is in the style of The Indigo Girls and if "Clear to You" were a bit faster, it could be The Ocean Blue.

For the most part, the music is well-written. "Broken Circle" and "You Chase the Light" incorporate piano nicely. In particular, "Mercy," "Wonder of Birds," and the sweeping "Notebook" are very good.

Some of the lyrics are trite. However, in all 13 songs there is substance. Peris writes truthfully about emotions, the ways to love and fear at the same time. Each song is written in first person, thereby conveying a strong personal testimony. They are lengthy and show depth.

In general, if one can stand Peris' voice, this is an impressive debut for The Innocence Mission. Otherwise, the album soon becomes very grating.

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This story was originally published on Tuesday, April 24, 1990.

Volume 110, Number 21

The story was printed on page 10.

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The Power Of Four Voices

By Wayne Robins. STAFF WRITER

Newsday, September 26, 1991

The Innocence Mission, from Lancaster, Pa., was put in the no-win slot of following Alison Moyet to close the show. The group features the intricate singing of Karen Peris, who occupied a prominent space onstage behind her keyboards. The literary ambitions of songs like "And Hiding Away" ("I read a book of Madeline and her friends in two straight lines / In Paris, in a house with vines") didn't work in the bar's party atmosphere. (Come to think of it, they don't work that well on the new album, "Umbrella," either.) It's nice to know there's a place on a major label (A&M) for Innocence Mission's kind of careful intelligence, but the pretentious lyrics and art-rock arrangements made them come across as a little humorless and more than a little dull.

The ethereal voice of Innocence

Anne Gowen

The Washington Times, December 14, 1989

She has been compared to Kate Bush, Stevie Nicks and Maria McKee. But The Innocence Mission's Karen Peris gently dismisses such talk, the way she handles most everything.

"Everyone wants to be recognized for themselves," she said in her trademark high, quavering voice. "You have to expect comparisons when you're new. People seem content to label everything that's new as a comparison to something else."

Mrs. Peris is the lead singer and songwriter for The Innocence Mission, the band that opens for House of Freaks Saturday at the 9:30 Club. The Lancaster, Pa., band has been fine-tuning its progressive folk sound since its members started playing together at Lancaster Catholic High in 1982. The band (which also consists of Mrs. Peris' guitarist-husband, Don, bassist Mike Bitts and drummer Steve Brown) recently released its self-titled debut album after playing the East Coast club circuit for several years.

The record was produced in Los Angeles for A&M by Larry Klein, husband of folk singer Joni Mitchell, who is reportedly a fan of the group. The songs on the album have wide-ranging melodies that showcase Mrs. Peris' vocal range.

"I always did have a lower voice," she said, "but sometimes I feel a lyric more if I sing it in a higher range. There's more emotion then, I think."

Her voice does have the same high, ethereal quality as Miss Bush's, yet is gutsier in the lower ranges. Sometimes, such as on the track "Wonder of Birds," her lower range sounds more heartfelt when she abandons the upper-octave, Bushlike keening.

Mrs. Peris writes most of The Innocence Mission's material either by herself or with her husband. The band's Catholic upbringing and rural roots continue to affect its music, she said. Some of the songs on the album take a turn toward whimsical flights of fancy, such as "I Remember Me," written about the woman who claimed to be Anastasia, the last Russian czarina, or "Medjugorje," a town in Yugoslavia where the Virgin Mary is said to have been seen. Yet most of the material on the album deals with themes as common as family life or the loneliness that comes with old age. In "Broken Circle" Mrs. Peris wrote "Family, family/Center of our lives/Broken circle, heal thyself/Hands together, bind."

"So many things happen in a big Catholic family that you don't think at the time are wonderful and funny, but now, looking back, there is so much to write about," said Mrs. Peris, who has three brothers and two sisters.

After touring for most of next year, she said, the band hopes to make another album.

RECENT RELEASES

Calgary Herald, August 18, 1991

Innocence Mission: Umbrella (A&M). It's been said imitation is the best form of flattery. If that's true, then Pennsylvania's The Innocence Mission must worship fellow Americans 10,000 Maniacs. Umbrella is such a rip-off of the Maniacs' Tribe After Tribe album you can almost hear the tunes being torn from the album. Mission's singer/songwriter Karen Peris clones Natalie Merchant's seductive and indolent vocals, copying the Maniacs' sound except on later tracks where she puppets Kate Bush. Peris's dreamy lyrics are limp and trivial compared to Merchant's beautifully crafted messages about social injustice. The band tries for the same jangly, sunny feel as the Maniacs but, like the waxen museum replicas, it lacks life, color and spirit. (S.A.)

The Results Are In

Time, February 12, 1990, U.S. Edition

THE INNOCENCE MISSION: THE INNOCENCE MISSION

Pleasing, slightly spacey sounds that are tinged with '60s folk rock and psychedelia, then spruced up with shades of Joni Mitchell ("I showed him my notebook/ The underside of my soul") and a little jolt of feminism. Overwrought but promising.

Innocence Mission

By Wayne

Newsday, December 8, 1989

For those who prefer more brains than brawn, Innocence Mission, a band from Lancaster, Pa., is at the Knitting Factory Sunday night. Singer Karen Peris' aerosol voice and ethereal songs evoke comparisons to Kate Bush and Jane Siberry. The band's debut album, "Innocence Mission," (A&M) is full of gorgeous sonic overtones courtesy of producer Larry Klein, who's working firmly in the Brian Eno / Daniel Lanois school of ambient electronics.

Among the songs that emerge from all this loveliness, the most charming is "Curious," a sweetly spirited song about someone else's love affair. And "Broken Circle" may be the saddest, truest song ever written about the decline of the nuclear family. Although Innocence Mission possesses a ferocious intelligence, the album's melancholic mood becomes a bit much after a while. Although Mr. Big's muscle and Innocence Mission's sensitivity each have something to offer, my perfect band would be a combination of the two. Especially if that band could also have Stevie Wonder's heart.

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RECORDS

By ANDY GILL

The Independent, February 2, 1990

THE INNOCENCE MISSION, The Innocence Mission

Karen Peris, singer / songwriter with sophisticated folk-rock outfit The Innocence Mission, is highly regarded by Joni Mitchell, with whom she shares a lyrical intelligence and technical rigour. This debut album, produced by Mitchell's husband Larry Klein, shows the band to be equally careful and considered as regards the songs' arrangements, which in some cases over-step their refinement. 10,000 Maniacs spring instantly to mind (they share the same manager, Peter Asher) though for some songs, Fleetwood Mac would be a more pertinent comparison, so ably do The Innocence Mission embrace the smooth textures of mainstream American AOR, and Peris the light-headed vocalese of Stevie Nicks.

The arrangements, though, are very much determined by the mood of Peris' lyrics, which manage to cover a wide range of subjects whilst remaining fairly tightly focused round ideas of family and belonging. The most commercial track ("I Remember Me"), for instance, is a skilfully rendered first-person account of a widow - actually Anna Anderson, the former Czarina Anastasia - facing senility with a brave face; "You Chase The Light" is a conversation between an Impressionist painter and his neglected wife; and "Come Around And See Me" poignantly captures a lonely grannie's declining dotage of couch-potatodom. Never less than impressive, and only occasionally slipping into the sickly and sentimental, The Innocence Mission suggests that Karen Peris may be a major talent for the Nineties.

RECORD REVIEW

By Steve Morse, Globe Staff

The Boston Globe, December 7, 1989

INNOCENCE MISSION; INNOCENCE MISSION;

On the other hand, Innocence Mission are promising. They are from Lancaster, Penn., and play dreamy, surreal music that lands somewhere between Kate Bush and the more pensive side of Cyndi Lauper. Their only trouble is that singer Karen Peris has an annoying habit of jumping into a falsetto at nearly every opportunity. Once she learns to vary her voice - as in the gentle song "Mercy" - the band may go places.

Pop 'Innocence'

Eve Zibart

The Washington Post, May 27, 1988

TIRED of the unvarnished truth? Beauty is youth, too; and a little melodic mysticism can be mighty restful, especially in pop music. Armed with a stunning voice, a Kate Bush sensibility and a parochial school poeticism, Karen Peris and The Innocence Mission wander lulling through a child's garden of virtues.

This is a band that deals in ideals, and why not? The first moral imperative is aspiration. After that comes adolescence and after that, perhaps, art. Peris, a post-Romantic visionary ("the 19th century evokes innocence to me"), proselytizes so winningly that it's easy to forgive the faint trace of self-absorbed confessionalism in her earlier lyrics.

"'Innocence' stands for all the good things of childhood, the things we should try to hold on to," says Peris. "It's a state of mind. And 'Mission' is a kind of place to us, not a [crusade] . . . I see it as an old house filled with all these childhood memories."

This is a young band in both senses of the word (Karen Peris, at 25, is the oldest of the four). The weakness of mysticism is that it often mistakes metaphor for meaning, when it really only provides a mirror. It needs a darkness, a shadow-life, to give it depth, a dichotomy that has only begun to grow on Peris.

Yet naivete' is not necessarily a failing here. Peris writes of what she knows—her family, her husband (Mission guitarist Don Peris), her own imaginings—and there are no passages so poignant as those of adolescence. As she says, about half of her lyrics are based on personal experience, and the other half on characters from books and dreams; of those, most are characters "on the outside looking in."

Consider "I Remember Me," a lament placed in the mind of Anastasia Romanov (or rather, Anna Anderson, the woman who persuaded many people that she was the sole surviving tsarina). Defiantly plaintive and personal ("I know who I am; I think I should know who I am"), it gains far more from its underlying archetypal impact; the amnesiac, unacknowledged Anastasia is also the most famous embodiment of every child's conviction that he or she is a changeling, a princess among peasants.

Peris has a voice like a Toledo blade: silver on steel, both shining and slicing and with a shivery quality in the higher registers that recalls the similarly visionary, pre-formula Dolly Parton. The group is maturing rapidly, and their stage poise is impressive (from Amish country, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, they've been together since high school). They have been signed since December to A&M Records, but label execs are still huddling over a producer.

In the meantime, they're working it out on the road. The Innocence Mission headlines Saturday at the 9:30 club.

Bright As Yellow

Billboard, July 08, 1995

PRODUCER: Dennis Herring

WRITER: K. Peris

PUBLISHER: Umbrella Day, BMI A&M 8419 (c/o PGD) (CD single)

It's been way too long since we have heard from this band, which showcases its new album, "Glow," with this beautifully textured modern pop epic. Karen Peris voices her own delicate poetry with girlish allure while warmly echoing guitars, reminiscent of Robert Fripp's best work, wind and weave around her. Modern rock radio programmers will feast on this single as will smart triple-A tastemakers.

On a Mission

The Columbus Dispatch, July 27, 1995

Karen Peris of the Innocence Mission has a voice somewhere between Bjork and a young Marianne Faithfull. Combine that voice with distinctive piano playing, throw in songs influenced by John Lennon, Paul Simon and R.E.M., and you have an act tailored to the adult-alternative format.

Given the Innocence Mission's promise, it surprised us to learn that the Lancaster, Pa., quartet has quietly existed for a dozen years with only three albums to its credit.

IM's latest, *Glow* (A&M), makes for easy listening for thirtysomethings. Ably backed, Peris' vocals soar amid airy lyrics with slight melodies. Mission members shouldn't be quite so innocent; they should bust loose a bit. Songs such as *Everything's Different Now* and *Speak Our Minds* hint at greatness.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Innocence Mission Delivers Long-Awaited Album

Elizabeth Munding

The Tennessean (Nashville, TN), Monday, July 31, 1995, page 3D

Alternative music group Innocence Mission is glowing with joy these days over the release of its new album - and rightly so.

Glow, a follow-up album to the 1991 Umbrella disc, took four years to hit the record stores.

The group, led by Karen Peris, made a splash in the alternative music scene with its slick 1988 self-titled album. Although the quartet released Umbrella soon after, it did little to continue the buzz about the group. Innocence Mission's third effort was set to be released in 1993, but the group and its record company, A&M didn't feel it was ready.

"We wanted to add some more songs," Peris says. "It was just going to be one [song], and we recorded five more songs."

Glow, a collection of 12 Innocence Mission tunes, debuted in June. Peris' dreamy voice, which has been compared to that of The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan, defines the group.

The Glow tour brings these Lancaster, Penn., musicians to Nashville today.

Its third record can also be said to be a bit Brave, one of the melodic folkie singles off the record that speaks of the spiritual glow the group is chanting about.

You go outside. You see the Holy Spirit/ burning in your trees/ and walk on, glowing with the same glow./ Still you tremble out and in.

"In Brave, it's just about the existence of anxiety and fear and daily life despite a strong faith. I'm questioning myself as to how I could be anxious sometimes in spite of my belief," says group inspiration Peris.

The new record represents a change in the group's outlook and sound, too. "Now we are all three or four years older, and we've had different experiences in our lives since then," says Peris, who penned all of Glow's songs. Peris, 32, uses the powerful poetic lyrics she writes to transport listeners into the past and the future.

The third album's expression has a simple feel to it. The group's stripped-down acoustic sound, developed by Peris' husband Don on guitar, Mike Bitts on bass and Steve Brown on drums, resonates with a rawness not found in its previous two records.

"I think the instrumentation is a little simpler, but lyrically it is maybe more domestic in that the setting for the lyrics is usually in the house or the backyard," says Peris. "It's important to me that the lyrics be visual and that they be clear to people."

In the mellow Keeping Awake, for instance, Peris' lulling voice over the simple guitar strums call up childhood memories of siblings and parents settling in for the night. You might picture TV's The Waltons as they lovingly ended the day.

"Songs often start out as the release of something personal. If you think about the universal aspects of your own experience."

Peris hopes to universally connect to listeners also through the sorrowful That Was Another Country. "Feeling the loss of a friendship. I think that's something that everybody has felt. Remembering a time when a friend was more present in your life."

Admitting that she feels particularly close to That Was Another Country, she says there's one other song that draws her in - I Hear You Say So. Although the song's positive spin is what she likes, there's more reason. "The four of us recorded it together just around one microphone, so it was a really fun song to record, and we were really happy to record it that way," she says.

Another affirming song off the record is Bright As Yellow, which praises individuals who have an inherent glow that naturally brightens our days. "I wanted to write about a quality I admire in people who aren't self-conscious. They can make others feel comfortable just by being themselves."

Influenced by musical groups from Simon & Garfunkel to the Red House Painters to 10,000 Maniacs, Innocence Mission members hope to be well-received by their audience whether they are playing new songs or old favorites such as Surreal, And Hiding Away and You Chase the Light.

"So far, people have been singing along to the new songs and the old songs," Peris says.

As to what reaction they expect in Nashville? "We've never played in Nashville. If people do come, that will be a nice surprise."

THEIR MISSION: A REFINED, GENTLER KIND OF ROCK

Los Angeles Times, August 17, 1995

By MIKE BOEHM

In the aggressive 1990s, one of the rarest delicacies in pop music is delicacy itself.

The Innocence Mission from Lancaster, Pa., is a rock band out of its time. Its music does not explode with impulsive bursts of feeling, sinewy declarations of purpose or raw cries of alienation. No, the Innocence Mission, which plays tonight at the Coach House, is almost always meditative and deliberate. There is a sense of refinement, an elevation of sensibility, that contrasts with the suddenness and harsh immediacy that have become standard for much '90s rock. Singer Karen Peris and her three band mates may be pop music's last Victorians, making music that sounds more like a throwback to the 19th Century than part of rock's hectic drive toward the 21st.

This kind of approach calls for a voice of pure beauty, and Peris supplies it with a soft, breathy, languid soprano that echoes Harriet Wheeler of the Sundays, with a touch of Victoria Williams' idiosyncrasy fluttering in its high range.

The Innocence Mission consists of Peris, who plays keyboards; her guitar-playing husband, Don Peris; bassist Mike Bitts, and drummer Steve Brown. The four began playing together in 1982 when they were classmates at a Catholic high school in Lancaster. Their recording debut, "The Innocence Mission," arrived in 1989, followed by "Umbrella" in 1991; the records won good critical notices, but reaped only limited sales.

The band's third album, the recently released "Glow," is a cohesive sequence of songs that draws a listener into the Innocence Mission's world of gentle reverie without the occasionally precious, affected tone that could throw up a barrier to similar immersion on the previous recordings.

While not quite a concept album, "Glow" has an implied narrative flow. In it, a perceptive, sensitive and good-willed young person, the sort who might figure as the heroine of a novel by Jane Austen or Louisa May Alcott, is forced from a cocoon of childhood comfort. She faces, with some hope but also considerable trepidation, the difficulties of moving ahead into a matured life, with all the changes, choices and separations that entails.

Peris' style is full of such literary touches as a fondness for using proper nouns for places and characters. "Keeping Awake," the luminous opening track of "Glow," may be one of the few rock songs influenced by Marcel Proust: It exactly parallels the opening childhood bedtime scene of "Remembrance of Things Past," except that Peris' portrait substitutes an overriding sense of safety and warmth for Proust's quaking anxiety. As the album progresses, childhood ends and we hear from narrators learning to cope with losses either anticipated or already suffered. The band is capable of rocking a bit, as it does with a flowing, streaming momentum on "Speak Our Minds." But most of "Glow" comes wrapped in gently thrumming, lightly rippling textures. Like a good 19th-Century novel, the album can take us out of our own frazzled time into a world that seems saner and more hospitable to the nurturing of a sensitive soul. Also like a good 19th-Century novel, it is not divorced from emotional currents and challenges that stay the same for the individual, no matter what the temper of the age.

REVIEW: *Glow*

Detroit News, September 9, 1995

Since its 1990 debut, the Mission's dreamy atmospherics and minimalist, subtly hypnotic melodies have drawn comparisons to Kate Bush, Cocteau Twins, Jane Siberry and 10,000 Maniacs. But owing to the band members' pastoral vibe, their sound on this, their fourth album, is singularly their own. Singer/songwriter Karen Peris' spiritual musings seem more linear and less impressionistic this time out, although she still displays a poetic penchant for floral metaphors: The disc is awash with tulip reds, flower scarlets, yellow teacups, etc. This isn't music for just swooning, Bronte-obsessed school girls, however. When Peris sings, "You see the Holy Spirit burning in your trees, her spiritual passion is palpable. And her use of these and other Christian images suggest that unlike most modern pop groups, the Mission seeks to comfort, not provoke.
