



THE RUBY SUNS

Travel And Play



The Ruby Suns

The Ruby Suns team with Higher Places to perform at the Beck's Music Box this Saturday, March 7. BOB GORDON speaks with Ryan McPhun.

The Ruby Suns are back out clocking up flight miles for 2009, but it was last year that proved to be one of many journeys for the Californian/New Zealand duo.

It was a year that culminated in a tour through Europe at year's end, which has emerged as something of a career highlight for the band and one that speaks of their priorities.

"That was our last big tour and probably the finest one we did all last year," says Ryan McPhun, "because we did it with friends. We did a UK tour with some friends of ours from New Zealand who are based in London called Laurence Arabia. Then the European part was a couple of weeks with The Dodos, who we've met up with a few times this past year. We were travelling with both bands at, in the same vehicle. It was really good hang time and the shows were good, so it was all great."

The Ruby Suns' second album, *Sea Lion*, was released in January last year and saw the band head out on tour, as McPhun stated in a blog, to 'strategically avoid the New Zealand winter'. It was a plan that succeeded with lots of travel and play.

"It was a really long year," says McPhun. "We did a shitload of stuff and gone to more places in one year than I've ever been. It was a lot of hard work, a lot of flights, a lot of cabs, a lot of driving. When I think of 2008 I think of a lot of work (laughs)."

Sea Lion was released in the US on the iconic SubPop label. One wonders how handy that is these days in the States?

"I think last year when we signed with SubPop I was naively expectant that that would mean a lot," McPhun considers. "I thought it might have carried a lot of weight... and it might do, but I'm not really sure that it does. I mean, they have so many bands out touring and so many bands in general. I feel like as far as you can go it's less to do with your label as it is with the actual band. If your band gets buzz, then you're gonna do really well, or if you get a lucky break or something."

"It gets our name out there and that helps, but it doesn't really mean a whole lot in the end. You need to have a whole lot of other things backing that up. That's why we were touring so much."

While *Sea Lion* featured acoustic sounds, after 12 months of touring (with co-members Ameer Robinson and Imogen Taylor) the songs have evolved with performance and frequency. The Ruby Suns are more an electronic band these days...

"The songs sound a lot less acoustic than they did on the album," McPhun states. "For some songs I've sampled the actual recording, or a part of them, and others I've created new samples out of instruments. So it's still mostly instruments, to some extent. The songs definitely sound different and a lot of them have gone through a few different set-ups over the year. It's been good in that it's kept things fresh for us."

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