

## FrederickNewsPost.com

### Q&A With Three Red Crowns

#### Baltimore band set to play first Frederick show

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By [Katie Crowe](#)

The Baltimore-based group Three Red Crowns specializes in what one might classify as long-form orchestral rock. The nine-piece band -- led by co-composers Linganore High School and Baltimore's Peabody Institute grad Anna Meadors and former New York City punk rocker John Paul Carillo -- frequently plays at festivals, concert halls and other bar/arts venues, like The Windup Space in Baltimore. The group finished recording its first full-length album, "In This Light," in 2012 and began working on its second, called "If 3 was 8," in August with hopes to release it in 2014. The Frederick News-Post recently caught up with co-composers Meadors and Carillo in a phone interview from their homes in Baltimore, prior to the group's upcoming show with Silent Old Mtns. at Cafe Nola.



Photo courtesy of Jon Carroll

#### **FNP: How did this group originally come together?**

Anna: It started as a trio -- myself, John and his roommate, who played drums. John heard me played sax in his roommate's group. About a year later, in 2010, John was writing something and had an idea for a string quartet to join. Since I was at the conservatory, I knew a bunch of string players and got them on board.

#### **FNP: How is this group different from any other you play with? What makes this group in particular so unique?**

Anna: The type of music we do has evolved. The trio still plays as a trio sometimes ... but the trio is more bombastic -- we don't write anything out. With the strings, we have scores for everything. The trio is more improv-based, while with Three Red Crowns, some of our compositions are more rock-based and we also have some more classical pieces. With the larger ensemble, we consider it (Three Red Crowns) to be more rock and minimalist ... and we have vocals in it as well. Our sound is, in a word, epic. It's orchestral. It's big and epic rock with classical and jazz influences. Each song is pretty long, most of them five to six minutes, and we also have one 11-minute song -- one that I composed, called "In the Right Light." I'm also making a stop-action animation video for that one, just with paper cutouts. I have to film it frame-by-frame and then put it all together. I'm hoping to premier that at our next Baltimore show on April 11. We would just show it projected behind us while we play the song.

John: It really does expand things by having a string quartet, and Anna plays all the saxes that you can play -- soprano, alto, tenor and baritone. Even with the New York bands, they're getting a lot of their sounds from electronics and keyboards. Three Red Crowns does use some electronic sounds, but because we have all these real instruments that can do so much ... it's a higher level of listening and composition than I've ever experienced before.

#### **FNP: You said earlier that the group began working on its second album in August 2012. How is this album going to be different from the first?**

Anna: We have one track that is just percussion and bass, which is new territory for us. Our drummer came in with his whole arsenal of equipment and played each one separately -- about 20 different pieces of percussion -- and then over-dubbed each of them. Then we layered the bass parts over it. This one also has a lot more vocals. Our vocalist is writing a bunch of new stuff -- some of which we will be playing at the Frederick show.

**From left to right, Anna Meadors, John Paul Carillo, Jim Hannah, Rajni Sharma, Caleb Johnson, Ruby Fulton, Raili Haimila and Domenica Romangi.**

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**What:** Three Red Crowns with Silent Old Mtns.

**When:** 9:30 p.m. Jan. 26

**Where:** Cafe Nola, 4 E. Patrick St., Frederick

**Tickets:** \$3

**Info:** 301-694-6652; [www.cafe-nola.com](http://www.cafe-nola.com)

**FNP: Tell me about your composing and songwriting process.**

John: Anna started one of our best pieces, for example, called "In the Right Light," on piano. There's no piano in the piece, but she got the chords from there. My tunes usually start on guitar, some of them on bass. I will usually start my day on either a song or the bass, and if I find a theme I like, I'll try to pursue it. When the songs go to the scoring on the computer, usually either Anna or I will hear something and say, Let's put that in, or I will say, I need another melody on top of this riff, but I can't hear it, and she will hear it; when she comes up with an idea, I will usually come up with an additional idea.

**FNP: What does the future look like for Three Red Crowns?**

Anna: I would like us to get signed and play more shows, more cities, and be able to tour more extensively. We went on a short tour in the fall, and we're setting up another one in the spring. We're just excited to share our music with everyone and would like more people to hear it.

For more information about Three Red Crowns, visit [www.threeredcrowns.com](http://www.threeredcrowns.com).

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