

Nikki & The RueMates

Through the eyes of the RueMates everyone lives together and shares one galactic room under a sun in an extensive universe, and the RueMates would like to extend their musical room to those who enjoy a certain kind of time-travel. Their music, with blistering slide solos on resophonic and electric guitars along with the soul of Nikki's melodious singing, weaves in and out of different musical eras.

The RueMates express some of America's great musical past through voice, guitar, and songwriting in their interpretations of classic female blues tunes (by artists such as Bessie Smith and Memphis Minnie), 60's-like electric guitar sounds, and thoughtful, dreamy, sultry, unguarded lyrics. In doing so they have held their spot in an exceptional corner of Minnesota's musical landscape.

Nikki (Matteson) Roux's journey into music began in a small community in Minnesota surrounded by big blue skies and the peaceful prairie. At age 13, she got her first guitar from her country-singing grandfather. She spent hours listening to and learning music on both acoustic and electric guitars while flexing her vocals to singers like Janis Joplin. At 16, it all culminated in a musical appearance on the national radio program, *A Prairie Home Companion*, performing as a contestant on the show, *Talent from Towns under 2,000*. She sang and played guitar on the classic blues number, *Trouble in Mind*.

Rich Rue, a guitar player for many area bands after his move to Minneapolis, is lead guitarist and co-songwriter for the RueMates. He grew up in the same community as Nikki and taught himself to play the guitar. He became the lead guitarist and co-songwriter for Lodestone, a high-school band that played shows, produced a record, and achieved local fame. Lodestone went through many transformations, finally becoming the Strangers band: a classic-rock group where Rich met Nikki after a member invited her up on stage to play a song. Rich and Nikki eventually formed their own act as a duo, performing country-blues, classic-rock, and original songs.

In 2003, Nikki and Rich released their first full-length album, *American Idle* (self-produced), and in the mid-2000's Carrie Deans joined them to play bass and sing. The new group was called Nikki & The RueMates. They played folk, spirituals, blues, and original music and sang stellar 3-part harmonies. In 2008, the RueMates released their first CD, *We All Live Together*. In the summer of 2012, the RueMates released their second full-length album, *Rise & Shine*. Composed mostly of blues and folk-rock songs, it is the first CD with all original material written by both Nikki and Rich. *Rise & Shine* also welcomes two new bass players: the country-blues styling of Jon Olson, and the jazz styling of Liz Draper.

Together Nikki, Rich and Jon form the current line-up of musicians in Nikki & The RueMates. Jon's similar background in blues and rock provides the swaying rhythmic foundation needed for both Rich and Nikki's guitar and vocals when they play as a trio. In quieter spaces audiences can still find themselves entranced by the wonderful duo of Rich and Nikki's intertwining dancing guitars, 20's-style bottleneck slide, and big, beautiful vocals singing songs about such things as apple trees, mail-slots, and mysterious green lights said to appear over the ocean as the evening sun goes down.