



## getting to know soraia:

by Markus Goldman

**S**oraia is an Arabic word meaning a particular or specific bright, guiding star. This is an appropriate name for the Philly band fronted by vocalist Sue, (a.k.a Mr. Sidney) and includes Joe (Mr. Rock N. Roll) on guitar, Travis (Yak Knof) on bass and Jeff (Grizzlemadam) behind the Drums. I had the pleasure of talking to Sue for about an hour and a half one Sunday night. The current incarnation of Soraia has been together since the summer of '04 and their first live gig happened to be at the legendary punk rock club CBGB's in New York City.

Here is a brief history of Soraia. From 2001 – 2004 Sue and Joe played many open mic shows together; Joe played the guitar and

Sue sang. They were looking to get a band together but could not find the right components to make the group whole and complete. They auditioned bass players and drummers for quite a while. Going through the usual means of advertising on websites and searching magazines for musicians looking to join bands, they finally found the bass player they were looking for in Travis. At first Sue wasn't quite sure if he was right for them, but Joe was completely convinced that he was their guy. A short time later they crossed paths with Jeff and knew right away that he was their drummer. The band was complete. This all happened in the late spring/ early summer of 2004 and they practiced furiously and religiously for a month and a half before it paid off. Their first live show was at CBGB's in New York City and everything has gone up from there. They played around Philly and Wilmington and were soon back at CBGB's playing to an over packed

house. Soraia continues to play live around the Philadelphia metropolitan area and have built quite a following.

Soraia has an album out called *Dirty Like Soaria*. I like the CD a lot. It's got a great alternative rock vibe and is very easy to listen to. Sue has a powerful voice with range and the band behind her is really solid, making *Dirty Like Soraia* flow. It's one of those CD's that you can pop in and keep listening to without flipping to the next song. This is refreshing in a day and age when many signed bands have only two or three good songs per release and would make more sense to pay a few bucks to download those songs than buy the CD.

My favorite Soraia song is Spider Kiss. It's not on the CD but you can find it at [www.myspace.com/soraia](http://www.myspace.com/soraia), or [www.soraia.com](http://www.soraia.com). You can download Spider Kiss, Jaguar Shark, Either Way and Black Girl for free at their MySpace page. Soraia will head into the studio in April or May to record

new material written since *Dirty Like Soaria*.

While chatting with Sue, I asked which is her favorite song and before I finished the question she answered "Spider Kiss." She then proceeded to tell me, "I like what Joe does in the middle of the song with the Middle Eastern sound and the solo... I just love it."

When asked if an event inspired the lyrics, Sue replied:

"I would say yes. If you notice, a lot of our songs are pretty reflective, like inner stuff going on or outside observation. I was watching how this guy I'm with flows above all the crap that happens, no matter what. He can stay totally in tune with that enjoyable animal part... maybe it's just women overanalyzing every emotional relationship event that occurs. This guy comes along and makes me forget. I don't need to think about this stuff and can just enjoy it. [The song] talks about the fear in my head and the mental stuff that goes on there. You can't see it and then all of a sudden you see it when the fire in real people comes out. It's about the personal experience of watching somebody else and just totally respecting and admiring that he can embrace this girl; who she is and the shit that she has inside her and he doesn't hold it against her or look at it (the drama). It was the first time I had taken a step away from the safe and known and took a risk by stepping into the unknown."

Sue also said, "Half the time I write and I don't even know what it's about."

But when the lyrics and music are finished and the songs are complete, they come together and she realizes where she went with each song. Writing Spider Kiss was very cathartic for Sue. Cathartic moments are huge and this was a huge moment for Sue, allowing her to take steps that she hadn't taken before. According to Sue, "Everything we've written since



[Spider Kiss] has been really open and really easy." Many of Soraia's songs are straight forward, like Black Girl, which was written about a dear friend's past experience. These new steps are seen in the bands growth from *Dirty Like Soaria* to the present and will be even more evident when they head back into the studio this spring. You can expect an even better second release out of the band, and there may even be a surprise as well [Wink].

Just from listening to *Dirty Like Soaria*, without having seen Soraia live yet, I can tell you that there is something special about this band. They are one of the many great local rock bands in the Philadelphia Metro

area who should get a shot. If the people of this area get out and support local music, Philly has the potential to blow up the rock 'n roll music scene. The more support we give these bands and the more noise they make nationwide, the more big labels will get out and give these bands a look. Hopefully, you have gotten to know Soraia a little bit and will check out one of their live shows. The websites to go to are [www.myspace.com/soraia](http://www.myspace.com/soraia) and [www.soraia.com](http://www.soraia.com).

Until next month,

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