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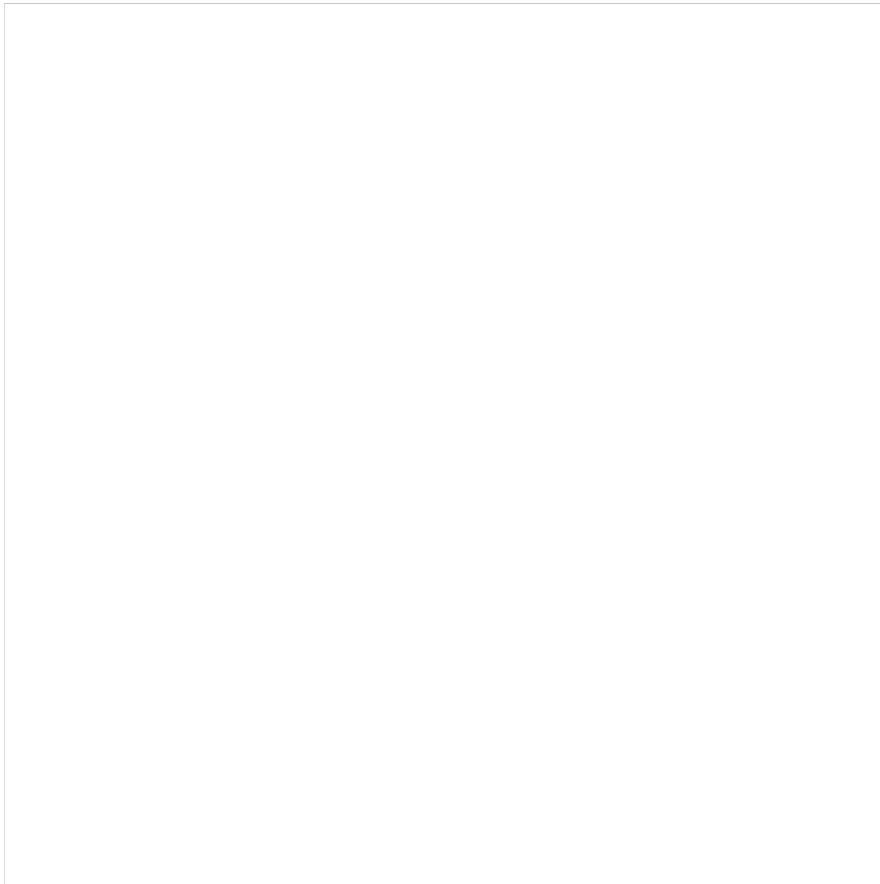
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## Needle In The Haystack Presents: Bella Ruse

Posted 2/22/11 2:02 pm ET by [Sarah Strom](#) in [Needle In The Haystack](#)



*(Credit: Andrea Ellen Reed)*

Minneapolis-based folk-pop duo, [Bella Ruse](#), are vocally reminiscent of the 20s and also incorporate many eclectic instruments into their music- glockenspiel, melodica, xylophone,

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kazoo and typewriter to name a few. Find out more about her addiction to Sims 3, their tour bus that runs on vegetable oil and how their relationship influences their songs.

#### **Who is Bella Ruse?**

Bella Ruse is me, Kay Gillette, and Joseph Barker. I sing and play the organ, glockenspiel, toy piano, etc, and he plays guitar. When we're on the road we play as a duo, but when we're in Minneapolis we add a drummer, Alex Young, and a bass player, Nate Rowan. They played on our most recent record, .

#### **How does it feel to be the MTV Music's Needle In The Haystack?**

We're honored, of course!

#### **What is "Complicated Rhythm" about?**

Joseph and I collaborated on the song last year. It's about the ups and downs of relationships and how every one is complicated, it's not always black and white, good or bad. It has a bit to do with our own relationship (we're dating). The second verse about climbing a dune is something we did after we first met. There's this huge sand dune in Holland, MI where we were attending college and we hiked up it and then camped on the beach that night. But all our songs kind of take on a life of their own once we start writing them.

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#### **How do you describe your music?**

Indie folk pop. I'm told sometimes I sound like Feist or Ingrid Michelson, which I consider a gigantic compliment. They rock.

#### **When did you realize you wanted to make music?**

I don't remember a specific time, really. I started piano lessons in kindergarten and it's just always been a part of my life. I studied classical music in college where I met Joseph and finally found the confidence to start making my own original music.

#### **Minneapolis music scene likes?**

It's a very nurturing community for independent musicians. Musicians really help each other out finding gigs and sharing contacts. The best thing about the music scene here is that people in Minneapolis really care about local music and do a lot to support bands they like.

#### **Dislikes?**

The weather is less than desirable 4 months of the year. And it's pretty far away from other big towns so touring is tough.

#### **Any good secrets to reveal?**

Hmm, I'm shamefully obsessed with The Sims 3 for iPhone right now. I've been trying to keep that hidden, but I'm ready to come clean.

#### **What do you love about music?**

It's a pretty selfish love. I just have a lot of fun doing it.

#### **Spare time activities?**

The Sims 3. Seriously, it's addicting. Also we watch a lot of Psych these days.

#### **Most memorable music moment?**

Playing at Lillith Fair last summer. It was awesome. Truly.

#### **Top 5 music influences?**

[Feist](#), [Over the Rhine](#), [Edith Piaf](#), [Regina Spektor](#), [Yael Naim](#).

#### **Odd jobs?**

I once worked at an Alltel store as the "Ambassador of Fun." Worst job ever.

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### Life influences?

Hard to distill down an answer for this one. My mom is my best friend so she has really shaped who I am. My dad is the most loving, caring person I know; he's a major influence. Every music teacher I've had- for better or worse. And Joseph, of course. I have no idea what I'd be doing without him. Probably still be ambassadorially managing the fun.

### What would you do if you won a 100 million dollars?

Buy a house, pay off student loans, and invest the rest. Ok, maybe also buy a bunch of new clothes.

### Favorite song to dance to?

"Gimme More", Britney Spears. It's so damn catchy.

### Cry to?

Brahms "Intermezzo in A major"

### Favorite item in your wardrobe?

Couldn't live without my dark wash skinny jeans from Banana Republic.

### Crazy tour story?

When you're traveling in a van that runs on waste vegetable oil every day is crazy. But we did get kicked out of a campground in Idaho once.

### Favorite band you've played with?

[Metric](#). They're my favorite band so it was a dream come true to open for them. Also, [Hey Marseilles](#). We played with them in a cool church in Bangor, ME. They killed that show. Also, [Jetty Rae](#). Beautiful voice. Also, [Bearkat](#). She plays a mean ukelele.

### What are your pre-show rituals?

A shot of tequila.

### In 5 years I see myself \_\_\_\_\_?

Hopefully we'll be doing the band thing full-time. That would be nice. And living some place warm.

### Anything else you want people to know about Bella Ruse?

We're not from Belarus. But we'd like to go there some day. Preferably after all the political turmoil dies down.

For more information on Bella Ruse visit [ourstage.com](http://ourstage.com)

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