

"People stare at us with a blank stare. You can tell they don't know what to make of us."  
 — Mary Anne Barckhoff, member of Viva La Venus



"Especially for female edge rock music, rock has been dominated primarily by men. Which doesn't necessarily mean they're better," said Mary Anne Barckhoff of Viva La Venus (far right). "I think a lot of people think of women's music as being a woman with an acoustic guitar."

**To check them out**  
 What: When Women with Culture Attacks!  
 Where: Freddy Spazzaro's, 122 College St., Asheville  
 When: 10:30 p.m. July 2  
 Cost: \$3  
 Details: Viva La Venus, Someday Mary, Dragmeat  
[www.vivalavenus.com](http://www.vivalavenus.com)

**webextra**  
 CITIZEN-TIMES.COM  
 To hear audio clips of the band, go to  
[www.citizen-t.com](http://www.citizen-t.com)

**On the list**  
 For photos, downloads, band info: Viva La Venus of Durham  
 ■ Someday Mary of Chapel Hill  
 ■ Dragmeat of Bryson City  
 ■ Citizen-Times.com  
[www.dragmeat.com](http://www.dragmeat.com)

# A brush with late-night fame

In his headline segment, 'Tonight Show' host Jay Leno jokes about a Scottdale native's band.

By MARK HOFMANN  
 DAILY COURIER

A Scottdale native and her band made their first appearance on "The Tonight Show" last week. Jay Leno, sort of, tried to stretch out our ears about the band, which consists of four members of the band.



The band Viva La Venus, of Durham, N.C., recently featured on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno, are (from left) Trey McLamb, Wendy Brancaccio, Scottdale native Susan (Hauser) Darney and Mary Anne Barckhoff.

## These women rock!

And they take the stage for a special show

**By Paul Davis**  
**Special**—Mary Anne Barckhoff was in their crew when her band Viva La Venus took its first rock number. People don't know what to make of these women.

"People stare at us with a blank stare," Barckhoff, who plays bass and guitar in the rock quartet, said. "You can tell they don't know what to make of us."

With people like Jacki Jayla and

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

about this chick? Leno invited McLamb to play on the audience. Her story? That's the it always tags along."

He had sent "The Who" a newspaper clipping featuring a photo of the band. Leno was commenting as part of his headline.

McLamb said, "I was so excited to be on the show. I didn't mind being a line of the joke. One of my favorite radio shows is 'The Howard Stern Show.' I'm a fan of that."

She then moved to North Carolina, where she studied guitar for four years, and then New University, where she graduated with a master's degree in technology.

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"I didn't know who sent the picture, but I'm glad they did."

SUSAN (HAUSER) DARNEY  
 GUITAR PLAYER AND VOICIST

attention."

The sudden jump of fame certainly didn't stop Viva La Venus from getting down to business.

"They're currently filming a music video in Greensboro, N.C., and are holding release parties in three different cities for their new CD, "Forget The Fairy Tale," which was released in June.

Their first CD, "The Never Ending Mending Story," is

## Viva la Venus to be Featured on TV's "Strong Medicine"

Viva La Venus, an original rock band from the North Carolina Triangle area, will be featured in the upcoming episode of "Strong Medicine" on the Lifetime cable network. Their song, "Mystery," is scheduled to debut on the medical drama on July 6, 2003 at 10 PM ET/PT.

As the self-produced CD on their own Striny Pants Records label indicates, Viva La Venus has a penchant for pleather—but this isn't about a fashion show. It's hard-hitting rock with infectious hooks and compelling vocal harmonies.

Wes Corbett of Fayetteville's Up & Coming Magazine describes the music of Viva La Venus as having "unbelievable melody" that will cause you to "wake up in the morning singing." These ladies truly believe that variety is the spice of life, and their original music has a distinctive Viva La Venus flavor—whether they're playing a jazz shuffle on their songs, "Killer" or playing Ramones-style punk on the tongue-in-cheek "Meat Loaf Nigga." At their live shows, VLV may cover songs by various artists ranging from Salt n' Peppe to Dokken.

Wendy Brancaccio and Susan Darney, both on vocals and guitar, started playing music together in 1999. They were later joined by bassist/guitarist Mary Anne Barckhoff and Leigh Peterson on drums to form the current band lineup. The powerful vocals of Brancaccio and Darney are often underscored by catchy guitar riffs, while their honest and intriguing lyrics tell of personal human ones. Wendy recently shared their rhythmic styling on stage with nationally acclaimed (http://www.jamiesanderson.com), at the 2003 National Women's Music Festival.

The first CD from Viva La Venus, "The Never Ending Mending Story," (http://www.cdbaby.com). Viva La Venus will be performing in the Tris Tavern in Durham (Highway 15/501 at New Hope Commons) and on Chapel Hill. For more information about Viva La Venus, visit their web

Susan Darney and Viva La Venus bring their brand of hard rock music to McKinley's Saturday night. See story, page 12A.

home from a rehearsal a message on my nu-watch Rock," but didn't by," McLamb said. "It was really cool to be on 'The Tonight Show.'" Darney said, "Too bad he didn't say our name."

From growing up in Scottdale, Darney has gone a long way to having her photo on "The Tonight Show."

She attended Southmoreland High School, where she played guitar in the high school marching band, concert band and jazz band.

After graduating in 1990, Darney went on to attend Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, where she studied guitar for four years, and then New University, where she graduated with a master's degree in technology.

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is considered a hard-rock band that's a little more pop-oriented

I love discovering new things, especially when I discover them accidentally. Last night I went to Dive Bar in Raleigh (which used to be Mary Lou's) and saw Viva La Venus, which is one of those bands I've heard about for a long time, but never actually seen. It goes without saying that I love female rock bands, but I was surprised to find out how awesome these girls (and guy) really are (they covered both Berlin and Salt n' Peppe). And I was pretty surprised to find out how big Dive Bar really is inside.

Here's the Viva La Venus Flickr stream.

And here's the movie (not one of my better ones, but you get an idea of what they're like).



Southmoreland High School graduate Susan (Hauser) Darney's band Viva La Venus was recently featured on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno as part of the "Headlines" segment. Members of Viva La Venus from left: Trey McLamb, Wendy Brancaccio, Susan (Hauser) Darney and Mary Anne Barckhoff.

## Southmoreland grad featured on The Tonight Show

Southmoreland graduate Susan (Hauser) Darney's rock band Viva La Venus was featured on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno July 11 when their band photo was used in the "headlines" segment during the show. The original article was published in the Asheville Citizen Times.

Viva La Venus played a show at Fred's Speakeasy. The show was sponsored by Go-Girls and featured three bands that had between one and three female members. The headline read "These Women Rock," referring to the women in all the bands. Viva La Venus's picture was large and next to the headline.

Leno took the opportunity to suggest the long-haired, goatee-wearing male drummer was an



Rockers Viva La Venus will visit Kings Barcade on Thursday, May 6.

## Viva La Venus brings hard rock to McKinley's

By JIM GREEN  
 Staff writer

A three-piece band who was recently the subject of a "headline" on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno will play McKinley's Saturday night at 10 p.m.

Viva La Venus — a three-woman, one-man quartet — will perform its brand of hard rock on their first appearance at the Clayton venue. The band is now before, at a show at Freddy's Peckery's on July 11.

A picture of the group, taken from outside a South Carolina club where they had played a show, was featured in the "Headlines" segment. The original article appeared in the Asheville Citizen Times, where VLV had recently played a show at Fred's Speakeasy. The show was sponsored by Go-Girls and featured three bands that had between one and three female members.

The newspaper headline read "These Women Rock," referring to the women in all of the bands. VLV's picture was large and next to the headline, and Leno took the opportunity to suggest the long-haired, goatee-wearing male drummer was an unattractive woman.

Members were excited when they found out.

"It was an honor to be on the show," McLamb said. "I thought the segment was funny, but when he started to mention me, I was like, 'Oh, uh, here it comes.'" But it ended up being quite funny and it was great to know that Jay saw them and talked about it and the picture.

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## MUSIC

Raleigh-based Viva La Venus enjoyed their 15 minutes back in July, when a photo of them found its way into Jay Leno's hands for a "Headlines" spoof on the Tonight Show. The shot was taken at the band's last visit to Fred's Speakeasy, a venue the foursome revisits Saturday, Sept. 24 in celebration of their latest CD, "Forget The Fairy Tale." Whether or not this gig will find them once again on national TV is anybody's guess — but given that the single "Mystery" off Venus' last album, "The Never Ending Mending Story," was featured on Leno's Sept. 24 in celebration of their latest CD, "Forget The Fairy Tale." Whether or not this gig will find them once again on national TV is anybody's guess — but given that the single "Mystery" off Venus' last album, "The Never Ending Mending Story," was featured on Leno's Sept. 24 in celebration of their latest CD, "Forget The Fairy Tale." Whether or not this gig will find them once again on national TV is anybody's guess — but given that the single "Mystery" off Venus' last album, "The Never Ending Mending Story," was featured on Leno's Sept. 24 in celebration of their latest CD, "Forget The Fairy Tale."

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The members of Viva La Venus are (from left) Trey McLamb, Wendy Brancaccio, Susan Darney and Mary Anne Barckhoff. They play at McKinley's Saturday at 10 p.m.

play all of these songs live, were studio songs only. They all came out of our live sets, so fans of the record may be let down when they come to our shows. Except live, we're live!

The album's highlight includes the dirty guitar and vocal harmonies of "Back Alley Love Stars," partial the single "Ad My Way" and "Freaky," the sultry vocals of the MTV-friendly "Never Forget," heavy hitters "Fug and Head to Rock," the epic "Night and Awake."

"That song 'Awake' has my favorite guitar solo," Darney said. "It's



Viva la Venus gets more exposure at Fred's Speakeasy on Saturday, Sept. 24.

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