

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)



**Rolling onto the music scene:** Rolla is dancing to the beat of their own indie drum, with a tour of the east coast this spring.

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## Local Band Rolla At Acoustic Cafe Sat.

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Before you go say that John Mayer is the only good music to come out of Fairfield, take a listen to Rolla.

Rolla originated about three years ago, through the relationship between local musicians and future lovebirds, Carrie Ernst and Fuzz. Originally two separate solo acts, the two joined together to form an acoustic-rock duo. Leadman Fuzz previously was a member of Fairfield bands Deep Banana Blackout and Tom Tom Club. Two members from Tom Tom Club were originally from Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame inductees, The Talking Heads, who are considered by some to be the most influential band of the last thirty years. With the later addition of bassist David Shuman and drummer Marc Balling, Rolla was born. Two CD's and a countless number of shows later, Rolla has become one of the most respectable bands in the Connecticut music scene.

Rolla's newest EP, "Fits and Starts," is an impressive release from this currently unsigned band, packed with six alternative tunes that are each unique. "Fits and Starts" has a style to it that makes it stand out from all the other indie bands that are out there now. Since the release of "Fits and Starts," Rolla has begun to gain attention from both record labels and all around music lovers.

Rolla is currently playing shows all over the Fairfield area, while working on their new album, which they plan to have released by later this summer. This Saturday they will be performing at the Acoustic Cafe in Bridgeport, their most popular venue.

The Mirror was lucky enough to have a chat with Rolla front-man, Fuzz, about the band's history and future goals.

**The Mirror:** From reading your website it sounds like you met your current band mates under some interesting circumstances. Care to explain?

**Fuzz:** Yea we definitely met by chance. The interesting part of the story was I had a gig [in Vermont] that I thought I cancelled. A week or so before the gig my booking agent realized we didn't cancel, so I decided to play. This gig happened to be where we [Carrie] met at. It was a near miss if you want to say. After that we started hanging out, and it was more of a relationship at first, then the music part crept in.

**TM:** And she later becomes your wife, correct?

**Fuzz:** Yes, two years, this June.

**TM:** I heard that before Rolla, you used to be known for playing in a jazz-funk type style. Do you miss your old roots, or are you more comfortable now with Rolla's style?

**Fuzz:** I had a couple of different things prior. Deep Banana Blackout was one thing. I still do that now, but we aren't really full time anymore. Stylistically I have been into a lot of different things: jazz, blues, reggae, you name it. Rolla has kind of spawned out of this acoustic duo that me and Carrie did originally, and the band grew from that. What I'm doing now, acoustic based alternative rock, comes easiest [for me as a songwriter.] Those other styles are great, id like to pay tribute to them. But I feel that within those styles are a little more sacred, and I don't really feel like I can tamper with it as much, and be as creative with it. I feel that with our music, it's just our music, and I don't need to have any pre, constrict notions about, it just sort of happens.

**TM:** Lets talk about your newest CD, Fits and Starts. What was the process in writing it, and are you satisfied with the results?

**Fuzz:** The process was basically more or less based off of the band's sound, for one thing. We were definitely pleased with the outcome with that, because we felt like in compare with the first record it was more of a sound that we generated as a band. The first album was put together real quickly, so this one we spent a lot more time trying to capture the feeling in each song, so we didn't hold back on trying different things in the music. As far as the feedback so far, people I think really like it. I think the songwriting turned up a notice and that record, or at least that's what people been telling us. Most of the first album as you imagine were a lot love songs, and in the second one, even though that's kind of a general topic, it's not predominant there.

**TM:** Having positive reviews from Fits and Starts, do you see yourselves talking with any labels in the near future?

**Fuzz:** We have already had a few interactions. We are actually working on a new album now. Fits and Starts was an Ep, and it was a good EP, but we are gonna make a full length album that we think will be our calling card. We are actually going back to our acoustic beginnings, but creating a band sound that based around that. We are gonna be putting that together this spring, and hopefully have it out by the summer time. With labels, you cant go in there unprepared. You should have lots of material in the can, and start to build up a decent buzz.

**TM:** Next week Rolla will be playing at the Acoustic Café in Bridgeport, a very intimate place to watch a show. Do you prefer the intimate shows over bigger crowds?

**Fuzz:** I like them both actually. They both have their pros and cons. For the acoustic sets, I like the intimacy that we don't get with a full band show. If we do an acoustic set, we can converse with the audience, talk about the songs a little more, and as far as sound, we can hear ourselves a lot better. That's a big plus over a big rock concert with a full band and screaming people. On the flip side, you can't match that energy in a smaller venue with a couple of acoustic guitars.

**TM:** What kind of musicians that you listened to growing up influenced you the most in becoming a songwriter, and influences the music that you make?

**Fuzz:** As a child, we all sort of grew up on classic rock. None of us ever really had a strong affection for "smoke on the water" or "freebird". Some of us liked some of the progressive rock, like a group like old Genesis, or some of the earlier stuff of Pink Floyd. We were all fans of The Beatles, and that kind of shows through our music. As we went on, a lot of us went into exploring a lot of different stuff. If we all had a sort of common ground would be sort of your classic rock, art rock, or British pop. The thing that we really like these days, we are big fans of the new emergence of the indie rock groups that have

been out, emerging on the scene like The Shins, and Modest Mouse, and things like that.

**TM:** Any advise for student bands here on campus?

**Fuzz:** The biggest thing I think bands sort of forget about this, especially with all these Internet ways you can promote yourself, with Myspace and blogs and everything, I think some bands forget to go out and play. I think its important for them to get real live exposure as well, and not just sort of put their music up on websites. Even though that's a good thing to do, the more challenging part is to go out, and the more effective part is to go out and let people see you. I would say don't let money rule your decisions, because what your buying when you play a show is publicity, you know publicity is expensive. We spend a lot of money on publicity just trying to get people to hear about us. If you can play a show, you are exposed to people, and I wouldn't turn it down if the pay isn't that good. A lot of bands do that, say "well they'll only pay \$50 or \$100 so screw that." I think that's a big mistake, because you get your foot in the door, and then eventually that's how you get people interested in your band. Just have to find those good exposure gigs, and that would be opening for someone who has a good local draw to an area. And you just gotta make friends out there, you gotta find those bands that are doing well, and without being a pain in the ass try to get friendly with them and tell them "hey check out our music, we'd love to do a show with you sometime" and sooner or later someone would be like "yeah come on board, cant tell you anything, but you'll get in front of our audience," and that helps bands out more than anything else.

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