

sky CRIEs MaRIJUAna

Anisa Romero knows the healing power of pot. She survived Hodgkin's disease with a big help from her friend.

BY JUSTIN HAMPTON

Anisa Romero seems light years away from the frail, cancer-afflicted figure that greeted her future partner in music and life, Roderick Romero, at the Seattle coffeeshop where he worked in 1986. The two would reunite under happier circumstances in 1990 as lead singers for Sky Cries Mary and marry three years later. But at that initial meeting, Anisa had recently undergone a barrage of grueling biopsies that proved she had Hodgkin's disease, a cancer which infects the body's lymphatic system. She was receiving chemotherapy, and the marks were obvious. "We started talking," Roderick recalls, "and she just lifted up her shirt and showed me this 13-inch scar."

Hodgkin's disease currently has one of the highest cure rates of any cancer. Fortunately, Anisa's affliction was spotted in a mercifully early stage. But the treatment was taking its toll, and she discovered that smoking marijuana could aid her recuperation. "I was having trouble eating because the radiation was making me continually nauseous. Plus, my abdomen was so messed up [from the biopsy]. So I told my doctor, 'I'm going to smoke pot.' And he said, 'Well, I've heard that it really helps a lot of people, and I think that that's fine.' It wasn't a prescription or anything, but I did use it pretty heavily just so I could keep up my appetite and eat during the radiation."

Anisa has since recovered, and reports that she no longer smokes pot. "I used it as a medicine and I consider it a medicine," she states. She and Roderick also emphasize that some members of Sky Cries Mary are recovering heroin addicts and must remain permanently on the wagon. But she has nothing but praise for cannabis' effectiveness. "Everything has good qualities and bad qualities," she says. "It's how you use it that counts. And I think if anything is used with respect, especially a natural substance like that, then you can get a lot out of it." They felt strongly enough about the medical-marijuana issue to perform at a benefit for California's Proposition 215 at Los Angeles' House of Blues in 1995.

"Sometimes, we as a band don't get

involved in certain benefits because there are so many other things we're working on," Roderick explains. "But the really focused benefits, like that show, are right on. This is something we want to get behind as a band." After playing selected dates on this summer's HORDE tour, Sky

Cries Mary (the other members are guitarist Michael Cozzi, bassist Juano, keyboardist/guitarist George Raphael, drummer Ben Ireland and DJ Todd Robbins) made their first-ever appearance at Seattle's Hempfest on August 24.

A dedicated gardener, Roderick laments, "I'm growing thirty different crops in my yard, and I just wish marijuana could be one of them. I wish I could feel really comfortable about it, and not live in total fear about growing a weed that grows naturally everywhere." A pot-pastry fanatic, his favorite recipe for vegan brownie muffins is included below at right.

The sophistication and polish of Sky Cries Mary's fourth full-length album, *Moonbathing on Sleeping Leaves* (World Domination/Warner Brothers), showcases the band's versatility. Steering clear of alt-rock traditions and the electronic touches of their past, SCM have matured into a style that melds progressive rock, new wave, Gothic folk and eccentric psychedelia. It's art-rock in the purest sense of the term. Even the painting by Anisa on the CD jacket is high art. Like the Mona Lisa, it was painted on hemp canvas.

"Hemp is really absorptive at first," Anisa says. "It takes quite a few coats of paint. But all of a sudden, after it's been saturated, it transforms into the most incredible medium to paint on, very silky smooth. Those old masters from the sixteenth century knew what they were doing." *



ANISA AND RODERICK ROMERO OF SKY CRIES MARY (SITTING). THE REST OF THE BAND STANDS IN BACK.

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CHARLES PETERSON

DARBURY'S SUNSHINE MUFFINS

female leaves (as many as possible)
1 carton creamy smooth tofu
(extra firm)
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup cocoa
1 cup of sugar, dark brown
1/3 cup canola oil
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
handful of pecans
a touch of cinnamon
a splash of strawberry vinegar

Grind as many leaves as possible until like dust. Add tofu and mix until consistency is green goo. Add flour, cocoa, sugar and oil. Periodically lick the spoon. Mix in baking powder, pecans (or any nut that you like), cinnamon and vinegar. Mix until dark, dark green. Pour into party-muffin mix paper and party-muffin mix pan. Bake at 350°F and periodically poke muffins with knife. When the knife comes out clean, they're done.

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