

greet

DEL RAY

MEET THE
Maysuns!

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The Band Formerly Known as the
Hanoi Ragmen Hits the Reboot

MEET THE *Maysuns!*



At the Evening Star Cafe, left to right: Max Powell, Kostia Howard, Dillon Miranda, Beck Moniz, Nathan Argust, Shaan Shuster and Gabe Harr. Photo by DMG Flicks.

The band formerly known as the Hanoi Ragmen hit the reboot



The band performed at the annual Bands & Brews pub crawl event in August. Photo by Brett Kitchen.

BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE BAND

Since its conception in the heart of Del Ray, the group “Maysuns” (formerly known as Hanoi Ragmen) has committed itself to accessibility and excellence without forgoing sincerity. Bubblegum-flavored dance tunes, starry-eyed ballads, and white-knuckled grunge dissertations all have a place in the Maysuns catalog; so long as they are executed with energy and authenticity.

Just Kids

The band doesn’t take their Alexandria upbringing for granted. The city’s spirit centered in Mt. Vernon Avenue left a lasting impression on the musicians. Their debut album *The Oldlight* tackles personal growth in pastel suburbia – where the conflict of loving your hometown and seeking to rise above it is exuded even by its streetlamps. For Maysuns, musical development is

inseparable from the neighborhood: “One of my first memories is listening to ‘Blueberry Hill’ by Fats Domino on the way to the YMCA,” says Max Powell, one of the band’s singers and guitarists. Maysuns member Gabe Harr says they “slacked off in public school, snuck out of our houses and met in parking lots, playgrounds, parks. But music was always a part of it.” Playing together in George Washington Middle School Band, jamming in Powell’s basement, or staying up to 3 AM showing each other new bands; the connection between the band members was forged in both music AND surroundings.

For a young musician in Del Ray, Rock of Ages Music was the promised land. “ROAM felt like [our] musical Big Bang”, recounts Harr. Local acts like Marian Hunter, Elizabeth Lane, and Indigo Thursday also passed through ROAM. Founded by owner John Patrick in 2011, ROAM afforded future Maysuns members the opportunity to get loud. They quickly set about playing in various ensembles and honing their musical repertoire. “I’d go from practicing a grunge set to a Van Morrison tribute band, grab some buffalo wings at Del Ray Pizzeria, and head back to ROAM for an all-80s tribute band straight into our group’s originals. It felt like someone had flicked a switch on my brain that couldn’t ever again go back to the off position,” recounts Powell.

Entering the DC Music Scene

After a series of local gigs, the first paid Maysuns show took place in 2017 at The Pinch in Columbia Heights. Harr and other bandmates remember their professional beginning as perfect despite its flaws: “The sound was crummy, the walls were covered with graffiti. There was no stage, and maybe 20 people watching. I was comfortable playing there because it was a basement - felt like rehearsal! A big part of our sound is that basement feel - it’s intimate, loud, crammed and busy, and it’s a place where you take risks and create in the moment.”

Maysuns has since scaled up its operation in the metro area, recently selling out in 2023 at the Black Cat, an iconic DC music venue. With a persistent and loyal audience, Maysuns says they “brought Alexandria to DC.” But the band has broadened its territory, performing gigs in venues between NYC and Atlanta: from NYC to Atlanta: “In almost every venue we play, we find a face from back home,” says Powell. “It’s heartening to see the continued support from the people that allowed us the privilege to begin this venture in the first place.” Although most of the Maysuns now live near Falls Church, its members still work, live, and pass their time in Del Ray.

The Reboot

The group now embarks on a new path, reflected with their recent name-change. Powell says “It was a difficult choice, given our history with the old one. But we’ve all come to the understanding that in pushing our creative boundaries, we should take the opportunity to rebrand as something that better suits the band’s identity and is more accessible for new audiences.” With their new single “Silencer” available for streaming and more releases and shows in the future, the band readies itself for a new phase of growth. And while the sky’s the limit, Maysuns couldn’t be prouder to call Del Ray its foundation.



For more about The Maysuns, including their latest release, scan the QR code.