

Ch. 25's 'Noise' has its ear to underground music scene

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Shirley Braha just might be the Barbara Walters of New York's underground-music world.

Consider this scene: Warren Fischer and Casey Spooner, who together make up New York's cult-favorite electro-pop group Fischerspooner, are sitting in their practice space. A discussion of their newest album with Braha, the interviewer/producer of the cable-access video music show "New York Noise," starts to get intense.

"This is the only time we get to talk [to each other]", says a weary-looking Fischer, "so we're just going to work through it. It was an ugly process making this record."

Both Spooner and Fischer seem to forget they're on camera. At one point, tears seem imminent.

"I just provoked them," says Braha, 22, of the interview. "I think it was nice they were being so genuine on camera."

Braha, a Brooklyn native, first devel-

oped "New York Noise" (which airs Tuesdays on municipal channel 25) in 2002 while working on her bachelor's degree at Smith College.

NYC TV general manager Arick Wierison offered Braha a show in part because of her local cred and experience. Since age 15, she has done everything from running her own indie record label — Little Shirley Beans — to interning at Matador Records and MTV.

At the end of last year — when NYC TV acquired Ch. 25, along with roughly 8 million potential new viewers, from Crosswalks Television — Braha began staging quirky interviews with such nationally known New York City bands as Animal Collective, the Nationals and Le Tigre. "You can't find these bands anywhere else," says Wierison.

"It's becoming a more regularly watched thing," adds Michael Grace of the pop group My Favorite. "People are beginning to trust it."

That is true in part thanks to the informal atmosphere the show promotes. In



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DEVOTED TO DISKS: Shirley Braha, the producer and host of "New York Noise"

one particularly amusing episode, Tommy Ramone waxed about the Ramones over tea. In another, the funk-inspired group 33hz cooked a "turducken" in their shared apartment while introducing videos by locally prized acts like Human Television, TV on the Radio and the Stills.

As music fans continue to gravitate away from the tube, opting instead for finding mp3s, ringtones and music videos from a seemingly limitless number of bands on the Net, it's easy to label Braha's

brainchild as anachronistic.

Yet she receives a load of viewer E-mails each week, many of which offer effusive praise. "The music is fantastic and without exception," one raved.

"People still watch a heck of a lot of television," Braha says. "It's a lot easier to press play and have all these great music videos come into your home."

"New York Noise" airs Tuesdays at 10 p.m., with encore showings Fridays at 9 and Sundays at 10 on NYC TV 25.