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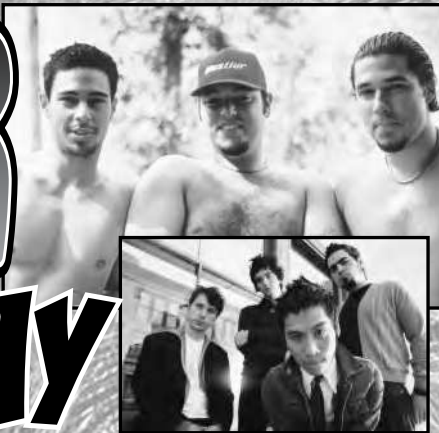
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plugged in

CD REVIEWS BY LOCAL WRITERS

All Night Radio, *Spirit Stereo Frequency* 2004, SUB POP RECORDS By Sean Campanella

Remember the tall, pale guy at the end of your dorm hall? The one who was always gassed up on caffeine at 4 am, making screensavers to match his favorite Hendrix songs, the one who knew everything about music and computers? Dave Scher and Jimi Hey of All Night Radio remember that guy.

Their debut release, *Spirit Stereo Frequency*, brims with the same insouciance and creative impulse – keep an ear out for multiple layers of undulating short-wave, glockenspiel, Moog synthesizer, bicycle chain and lots of other dreamy effects. All Night Radio displays all the craft, obsession and youthful license of the late '60s progressive pop movement, minus almost all of the genre's serious intent. Playful, not amateurish; goofy, not irreverent – *Spirit Stereo Frequency* is an homage to the prog-pop gods and a tip of the madcap to their psychedelic leanings.



All Night Radio's sound is sunny and upbeat; the result, ironically, is more of a skip-in-your-step daytrip than a wee-hour tour of the radio dial. The closing track is the exception; it spirals for several minutes into a fading loop of crickets, ghostly voices and sleepy-eyed acoustics, peeling away from the rest of the album like the final layer of consciousness.

The Wobblies, *Undesirable Citizens*

2003, TERRA FORMA RECORDS. By Robert Jacobs

This is a band of pissed off pirates born centuries too late. Instead of cutlasses and daggers, this Corvallis/Eugene band has drums, bass, and guitars. The broadsides are their lyrics, blasting at the current establishment. Sonically, the CD is a

mix of Misfits, Pogues and Sub-Humans, with a sprinkling of Nirvana.

The songs are short, machine-gun bursts of acid lyrics followed by surprisingly tuneful, yet oddly timed choruses, adding to the refreshing quality of the album. There's no room for self-indulgent solos here. In fact, this lack of posturing is evident throughout the whole record. The lyrics reveal themselves to be alive, insightful, angry, funny and thought provoking. It's cool to hear punk rock discussing problems that are serious, adult and real.

If there is a flaw, it may be in that many of the songs have a similar sound. Also, sometimes the guitars sound out of tune. But that doesn't draw one iota of enjoyment away from this impressive debut. These songs may not be perfect, but they are real, raw and vital. That, in my mind, is what punk rock is all about. Standout tracks are "Flowers in the Frost" and "Rich Man's War."

Station Wag, *Just Like That ...* 2004, SELF-RELEASED. By Matthew T. Stone

The local rock group Station Wag possess a sound that is as sleek and feral as their cat mascot, and their self-released debut *Just Like That...* exemplifies not only their penchant for songwriting, but the apparent feeling that, to them, an album stamped with a Parental Advisory label would be a badge of honor.

About the band: Lead guitarist Andy is an interstellar wizard with effects; the pedals before his feet stir the brew of the cosmic sound from his instrument. Singer Candace emits a voice of luscious viciousness, along with a primal growl which puts forth the sweetness of rage. All this while the combined forces of rhythm guitarist Ana, bassist Eric and drummer Tom create a three-way bundle of coitus-rock-music.

About the album: The opening track, "Whore," stands out upon the ears as pure rock-and-roll-commentary on society. Songs like "Spider" and "Sod" showcase the band's sense of rhythm, while others like "Candy Girl," "Float" and "Door" pull forth the artists' feelings of injustice, which we all must feel from time to time whether we want to or not.

All of us wear chaos behind our invisible masks. The members of Station Wag have not only removed their masks, but thrown them to the curb.

Wilco, *A Ghost Is Born* 2004, NONESUCH RECORDS. By Emily Carson

For those longing for a return to an album full of Wilco's easy rockers like "Casino Queen" (A.M.), or wispy ballads like "She's a Jar" or "Via Chicago" (*Summerteeth*), this is not the record for you. For those searching for that crumbling sensation, the beautiful, tooth-grinding ache perfected by "I Am Trying To Break Your Heart" (*Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*), you may be much closer – though there's still something magical about *A Ghost Is Born* that defies the notion that the album should be called *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, Redux*.

The band hits heavy on *Ghost* like never before. The arrangements are intricate: tense mixes of synth, organ, piano, clanging electric guitar and droning dulcimer. Well-paced changes in tempo create drastic shifts in mood throughout the album, ranging widely from folk-song sobriety to dark electronica to sheer playfulness – sometimes all in one track. Put on the 10:35 epic "Spiders (Kidsmoke)," and you'll see what I mean.

Old fans: Put on "Hummingbird," and note the maturity; hear the faint echoes of the Beatles' "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" and appreciate a band that has managed to age so well. For the rest: Go buy the record. Discover something new to hold onto.

Wilco *≠* a ghost is born

writers: DO you just wanna rock?



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