



Experienced

Ben Kweller belies his age.

Ben Kweller's self-titled third album is rich with the imagery of long-standing love, a decade's worth of traveling and the strange interactions that result when you cross paths with really old friends. A logical progression from his first record, the endearing, off-kilter *Sha Sha*, and 2004's more '70s-influenced *On My Way*, the new album features the singer-songwriter on every instrument, from piano (on the lovely ballad "Thirteen," a tonal cousin to *Sha Sha*'s soaring "Falling") to triangle.

You could call it Kweller's most mature album, though that description would be a little early in coming for a musician all of 25 years old. But young BK (as he refers to himself in *Sha Sha*'s "No Reason") has the career and experience of an older man. He left high school to play with his mid-'90s alt-rock band Radish, then headed to Brooklyn, started playing solo and eventually signed to Dave Matthews' ATO Records.

But don't let the DMB connection put you off. *Sha Sha* is a youthful masterpiece, 11 quirky, obscenely catchy pop songs that mixed Weezer's nerdy, distorted sensibility with a James Tayloresque, classic-rock piano underpinning and a notebook's worth of rambling, goofy, earnest lyrics (the album

begins with Kweller rambling, "When I was a movie star an asteroid had hit the earth and prematurely ended my career.") *On My Way* expands on *Sha Sha*'s energetic, playful charm, alternating rock songs full of dirty guitars with Kweller's signature heart-on-sleeve piano ballads. But it also offers up the title track, a sweetly unassuming campfire singalong about surprising yourself with the things you can be and do.

This third album gently stretches the BK sound — the rhythms are different, the lyrics broader, the charm laid on thicker. Kweller oh-ohs his way through "Magic"'s bridge, throws in a "momma" here and a "baby" there on "I Gotta Move" and comes off

unabashedly besotted on the sweet first single, "Sundress." Maybe "Red Eye," a mopey downtempo track, and some of the sillier lyrics to the bombastic "This is War" ("I can't be your friend/'cause I gotta knock you out") aren't among Kweller's brightest moments. But in a way, even the less immediately appealing songs make sense; it's all part of Kweller's Brooklyn-by-way-of-Texas, hip yet unironic appeal, and if every single song doesn't win you over on first listen, that might just mean they take a little longer to sink in and stay. **EW**

**Ben Kweller,
Sam Roberts Band
9 pm Wednesday,
9/27 • WOW Hall
\$15 adv., \$17 door**

*The Central Oregon Coast
Stay In The Middle Of It All.*

The Second Night Is Free.

Enjoy the central Oregon coast, its stunning beauty and all that it offers. Stroll the beach, explore tidepools, watch for whales and the array of wildlife. Go shopping, visit galleries and museums or attend local festivals. At day's end, enjoy the sunset over a quiet candlelight dinner. Whatever your pleasure, come stay at any one of these central Oregon coast's finest hotels, each with an incredible view. Now until December 30th, 2006, the second night is free. Friday check-in is excluded. Some restrictions apply.


Inn At Spanish Head
RESORT HOTEL
Lincoln City, OR
SpanishHead.com
800-452-8127

RESORT HOTEL & MARINA
EMBARCADERO

Newport, OR
Embarcadero-Resort.com
800-547-4779


Elizabeth
Street
Inn
Newport, OR
ElizabethStreetInn.com
877-265-9400


The Inn at
Otter Crest
Between
Depoe Bay & Newport
InnAtOtterCrest.com
800-452-2101


ADOBE
RESORT
Yachats, OR
AdobeResort.com
800-522-3623