



Immaculate Malkmus

Unstable no more!

It's been a year and a half since Stephen Malkmus released *Face the Truth*, his third post-Pavement installment, and it's finally Eugene's turn to buckle down with Portland's resident singing-songwriting maestro for an evening of ... hard rock? At least, that's how the WOW Hall is describing Malkmus and his on-again, off-again backing band the Jicks. We can't blame them; it's difficult to categorize an elder statesman of the indie scene without wandering into the murky terrain of "college rock" or "alternative."

Even more confusing is SM's relationship to the Jicks, who shared album credit with him on 2003's *Pig Lib* but were mysteriously dropped from *Face*. In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, Malkmus said, "I wanted to go back to more of a bossy style: in my house and at my leisure." Egos aside, Malkmus says he still wants to be a "team player."

If SM has a serious side, he sure has a hard time letting it gain any traction. He pours his soul into "No More Shoes," an eight-minute guitar freakout with the repeating mantra, "No more shoes / No more news / No more blues," a surefire

rail against our information-saturated culture that ends with the tongue-in-cheek yelp: "I want my Alka-Seltzer!"

Malkmus, who became a dad and husband in 2005, is facing the age-old dilemma of growing up without growing stale. Appropriately, SM kicks off "Malediction," his coda to the intersection of life and art, with a hearty farewell: "So long / Goodbye to the nervous apprehension / I certainly won't miss ya / My heart is unable to stay so unstable no more."

While Malkmus may be approaching stability, the same can't be said of the Jicks. With the departure of John Moens last October (now drumming full-time for The Decemberists), SM&TJ scored a powerhouse in Janet Weiss, recently freed from Sleater-Kinney — but still drumming for Quasi. The verdict is still out on whether PDX indie-inbreeding has been a blessing or a dilution, but one thing is certain: Weiss' addition propelled SM&TJ into the recording studio this past fall, meaning this month's West Coast circuit could be a (most welcome) proving ground for new material. **ew**

**Stephen Malkmus
and the Jicks,
Entrance
9 pm Tues. 1/16
WOW Hall,
\$15 adv., \$15 dos.**

Preternatural Vibrations

It took some time before people really took notice — several months to be exact — but finally someone picked up *Prayer of Death* by **Entrance** (aka Guy Blakeslee). Early this past summer, Blakeslee self-released his latest psychedelic, electric-blues gospel to very little fanfare. The album was both solid and visionary, melding blues rock dirges with jangly psychedelic incantations. But because of its limited promotions, it only reached the ears of a few diehard fans.

Early on in his career, Blakeslee alerted the world to his gifts as a precocious blues guitar player; on his previous albums (such as his debut, *The Kingdom of Heaven Must be Taken by Storm*), Blakeslee revealed his keen understanding of the dynamics and subtleties of the blues, acknowledging both its cathartic and depressive powers. But while his previous efforts paid homage to the acoustic work of legends such as Charley Patton and Bukka White, on *Prayer of Death* Blakeslee tempers his passion for the blues with an otherworldly, electric maelstrom that invokes the spirits of the Delta as well as some transient ghosts from North Africa and the Balkans.

The few media outlets that did champion the record, most notably *Mojo*, dublab.com and Pitchfork, undoubtedly influenced the modest psych-rock label Tee Pee Records to release the album. Hopefully now more people will have the opportunity to experience Entrance's transcendental, hypnotic vibrations. Paz Lenchantin of A Perfect Circle, the violinist who contributed string arrangements on *Prayer of Death*, will accompany Blakeslee onstage. — *Steven Sawada*



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