



Airport City Taxi Limousines

The Squids deliver the riches on new album

When the lyrics start to go all metaphorical in the middle of Dan Jones and the Squids new album, *Totally Human*, and you hear lines like, “Sometimes I feel just like a gremlin on the wing of our love” or “I think we saw the rapture, but it went as far as it could go,” you know you’ve entered true Squid territory. Fronted by English major Dan Jones and his assortment of backup players (Dave Snider, Mike Last, Patrick Hayden and Brian Patrick), the Squids make simple, witty, toe-tapping music for those indie fans craving whipsmart lyrics with their noodling guitars and staccato drumbeats. Oh yeah, it’s also quite danceable.

blend of rhetorical lyricism, the track can be deeply interpreted or just enjoyed for its rock-ability.

Many songs on *Totally Human* grapple with ways to survive in our skin. In “Gremlins,” Jones sings “Armor on, armor off, put it on, take it off” in a hard-charging tribute to the protective layers we wear (and ’80s punk rock). “Big Pile of Gravel” imagines a melancholy summer day in Eugene, post-breakup, where “firecrackers pop [and] snakes crawl around in the ivy.” But the power ballad wouldn’t be complete without Jones’ quirky flourishes, like a woman’s bathrobe hanging on a peg by the hatch of a space capsule. Other songs feature hot

Dan Jones & the Squids CD release, Touch Force, Chance Became Fate
9:30 pm Friday, June 1
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21+ show

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Formed in 2002 under the auspices of a recording project for Leisure King Productions, the Squids have shed and added members in true Pacific Northwest indie band fashion. In other words: Jones whipped a band together to put out a disc, *One Man Submarine*, and band members shuffled around, but the *idea of a band* stuck. For *Totally Human*, Jones and drummer Mike Last jammed out the tunes together in the garage and at various gigs and then brought the rest of the crew into the studio for an intense two-day tracking session that Jones described as “productive ... comfortable and fun, high energy [with a] live rockin’ vibe.” The result is a mix of classic Squids rock standards and a few surprises — good and bad.

The standout single is undoubtedly “What if the Whole Wide World,” if simply because it’s been stuck in my head for the past three months as I’ve been listening to the album, waiting for this review to be published. Full of killer hooks, eclectic percussion choices (maracas!) and Jones’ own

pink UFOs, gargoyles and airport city taxi limousines.

The downside is that some of the songs weren’t allowed to fully mature before the band hit the record button. Some songs, says Jones, “were pretty green, and we found our way in the studio,” thus leaving songs like “Rain and the Swell,” “Late Bloomer” and “Being Difficult” with an unrefined, spiceless touch that will most likely age well as the Squids play them live.

As for the Squids’ growing process, Jones says the community built around the band (which enjoys a cult-like status, complete with squid chalk drawings on the sidewalk the day of their shows) feels “different from the singer-songwriter thing” he usually resorts to when other Squids are busy. “I write songs for this band,” says Jones, “and the band just gets better and better, weirder, more psychedelic.” Indeed, Jones is making the effort to write songs he can just sing, without instruments, because, he claims, “people like to see a big man dance, I guess.”

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