



WHY?

Barr Band

Some folks call **Scotland Barr and the Slow Drags** "West Coast Roots," but the Portland six-piece sounds like standard beer-swillin', shit-kickin' y'alternative to me. Not that there's anything wrong with that either. They saddle up on the country-rock horse as surely as any alt country act I've heard in recent memory. Recalling the jangly twang and swagger of Old 97s as well as the desert howl and soul of Gram Parsons, Scotland Barr and the Slow Drags open the creaky door to dusty barrooms and tattered bedrooms and reveal the same boozy characters in different states of emotional undress.

On their second full-length, *All the Great Aviators Agree*, the band veers from high-speed honky-tonks to smoky bad-seed ballads, firing off heartache and hard times along the way like buckshot at a rusty stop sign. Singer Scotland Barr sounds like he's been heaved headfirst out of enough bars to have gravel permanently stuck in his throat. And he seems like he's had enough lonely nights and shattered dreams to have sorrow forever stuck in his chest as he sings, "At this degree don't count on me / I won't hold out much more / half way 'tween suicide and the liquor store." Throughout the album, pedal steels push up to the bar with acoustic six-strings and accordions while four-part harmonies hover like unfiltered smoke over the whole countrified scene. It's music that's probably meant to be listened to in front of a run-down doublewide, but a Cottage Grove dive is the next best thing. Scotland Barr and the Slow Drags play with Forest Ressenner at 8 pm Saturday, April 19, at Axe and Fiddle. 21+ show. \$5. — *Jeremy Ohmes*

The iTunes music store categorizes WHY? as hip hop and rap, but they probably find their core inspiration in poetry slams, garage sales and advanced philosophy courses (in other words, more hipster than hip hop). Yoni Wolf's scruffy, Jewish-bred voice effortlessly delivers "By Torpedo or Crohn's," a meditative, masterful rap on mortality, with staccato precision: "living in the tier between two spaces condemned / in one of the many places / you're not I am / hiding from my friends in the bathroom at Thrift Town / to write this tune down." A bit of a downer for such a fun band, but who said existential angst wasn't a staple of hybrid rap music? *Alopecia* is WHY?'s *All Eyes On Me*.

WHY? concludes their North American tour with DoublePlusGood and Cars & Trains at 8 pm Saturday, April 19, at Indigo District. \$10 adv., \$12 door. — *Chuck Adams*

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A FILM DIRECTED BY
LES CLAYPOOL

Electric Apricot is a spoof of jam bands centered around the band, Electric Apricot, in the style of "This Is Spinal Tap"



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