



It's All About Finding Balance

The duality of Minus the Bear

If you've seen Minus the Bear play, you know what to expect — David Knudson ferociously tapping his guitar strings with both hands, live looping and a general sense that these dudes are pretty much getting it on with their instruments. If you have yet to experience this, I encourage you to change that.

The quintet formed in 2001 in Seattle, Wash. In the seven years that the band has been together, the boys have managed to release numerous EPs, three full lengths and a remix album. Their latest effort, *Planet of Ice*, is the reason why they've decided to tour for the next year and a half, and it may arguably be their most impressive work to date.

This album is tight. Minus the Bear's signature sound comes from an emphasis on guitar pedals and electronic effects which is still prevalent — but not overbearing — in the album. Knudson and vocalist/guitarist Jake Snider synchronize their parts to a T and play around with guitar harmonization. There is also more of an emphasis on the keyboard in this album, which gives it more diversity. All of these aspects give *Planet of Ice* a psychedelic feel, much like Pink Floyd.

Lyrically, this album is dark, which contrasts with the generally up-tempo music. "Lotus," the album's nine-minute closer, is "about the influence religion has on our secular government and how the combination of God and guns leads to wars of false righteousness," says Snider in the band's press kit. According to Snider, this critical view of the U.S. is due to constant touring and witnessing the reality of the country firsthand. The band believes that contrast is good in music. "I think that duality often makes for a better song because it gives it so much tension," says Snider.

This duality can also be seen between the band's personality and the music they play. Though the concepts in the music are dark and serious, the band is nothing of the sort. Bassist Cory Murchy explains in the press kit, "As far as the music goes, we do take it seriously but we also like to have a good time — and hopefully the attention to detail, especially at our live performances, shows through to people ... We want it to sound right, but on the same token we do like to have a laugh and fuck around ... It's a nice balance." **EW**

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