

Smells Like Cabin Spirit

Sincere success for Fleet Foxes

If the backwoods-and-bearded folk revival of 2008 needed a poster child, it got one in the Fleet Foxes. In a few short months the band went from releasing a debut EP, *Sun Giant*, that made waves across the mp3-blog world to releasing a full-length, *Fleet Foxes*, to rave reviews from the established music press and NPR. It's debatable whether either release warranted such high praise (the band's from Seattle, natch), but what Fleet Foxes do well is capture the essence of campfire spirituals and bottle it up nicely, wrapping it in complete seriousness and utter sincerity. (Not an easy feat in this ironic, self-referential age.)

Led by unassuming, probably homeschooled, flannel-draped Robin Pecknold (with a voice like a

**Fleet Foxes
and Blitzen Trapper**
9 pm Wednesday, April 22
McDonald Theatre
\$17 adv., \$19 door



bastard child of My Morning Jacket and M. Ward). Fleet Foxes plow a pastoral chord, crafting hymnals and three- and four-part harmonies that wouldn't sound out of place at an obscure cultist retreat in northern California. (Or, for that matter, at the top of *Pitchfork's* list of best albums of 2008, such is Fleet Foxes' widespread appeal.) On their self-titled debut, a few songs rise above the mossy morass to become classics. When Pecknold sings "in the summertime" on "White Winter Hymnal," the rumble shift in tempo and texture sends a shiver down my spine. "Tiger Mountain Peasant Song" is as lush a song as Pecknold can craft with an acoustic guitar and lyrics that are sharp, poetic and carry more weight than any rhythm section. "How can the body die / you tell me / anything / everything / true," he sings, sending the last word to some unseen eternal world above.

Portland's Blitzen Trapper, the reincarnation of the Grateful Dead by any measure, also plays what looks to be an intimate evening with two heat-seeking acts from the Pacific Northwest. **EW**



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