



## SEASONS CHANGE

*Living the last days of tape culture with Eugene's VCR*

I'm hanging out with Eugene band **VCR** and two oversized black house cats at their rehearsal space in the Whiteaker. Drummer Tyler Howard is treating me to the fake TED Talk/quasi-standup comedy shtick he calls VAPETalks, which he occasionally performs at venues around town.

In the act, Howard riffs on techno-babble nonsense, spouting statistics about the cloud and the future of emails and global warming, spoofing the knowing gravitas that's become TED Talk's signature style.

It's funny stuff: light, carefree but still sharp as a tack. Which is a lot like the music of VCR, who've released their second album, *Season 2*. The self-produced album is available now on *Bandcamp*, with cassettes and vinyl possibly out later in 2018.

The trio recorded it with Evan Mersky at Red Lantern Studios in Portland. Emma Hurt plays bass and sings backup.

VCR lead guitarist and vocalist Chase Clark tells me *Season 2* is the second part of a planned four-part series of albums themed around the four seasons. VCR's debut, *Season 1*, was inspired by summer and released on well-known Southern California garage-rock tape label Lolipop Records!

Clark says his band had autumn in mind for the follow up.

VCR wanted to "remind people of fall, going back to school," Clark explains, and there was a lot of reflecting on youth while making the record: remembering moments like when a boy or a girl you fancy is finally talking to you. This kind of nostalgia is bittersweet for some, which touches on another theme of VCR's latest: the shocking loss of innocence the bandmates, as well as many others felt, after the election of Donald Trump — before and after "empire falling," as Howard puts it.

VCR hasn't exactly gone political, but with *Season 2* tracks like "Fake News" there is a new topical edge to the band's lo-fi sound, which Hurt says is inspired by '60s bands like The Kinks but also '80s and '90s punk and post-punk bands like The Replacements. VCR is flattered when I compare them to The Pixies.

"We sound like the last days of tape culture," Howard says.

VCR's strength is not so much virtuosic playing but their ability to spin up a rock 'n' roll frenzy on songs like "Next Day" off *Season 2* or "Outta My Head" off *Season 1*. VCR allows the music to nearly reach a point of recklessness, deftly pulling back at the brink of chaos. The band played their first show after only their second rehearsal.

"I want to know that humans are playing the music," Hurt says of VCR's slapdash style.

"We want to let it breathe," Clark adds, adding that in a trio "everything stands out" and musicians can't hide behind other instruments.

More than anything *Season 2* is the sound of friends making music — a "power-trio of friendship," as Howard calls it. Collegial and intimate, the musicians could be jamming in their rehearsal space or out playing some hoops because, as Clark says, "We just love hanging out."

*Season 2* is available now at [vcrjams.bandcamp.com](http://vcrjams.bandcamp.com). The band's next show is in Portland with **Cry Babe**, 8 pm Thursday, Dec. 28, at White Owl Social Club.

100%  
ADDITIVE-FREE  
NATURAL  
TOBACCO



INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC TOBACCO & ORGANIC MENTHOL

TRY 1 PACK FOR \$3.00\*

VISIT [AMERICANSPIRIT.COM](http://AMERICANSPIRIT.COM) OR CALL 1-800-435-5515  
PROMO CODE 96726

CIGARETTES ©2017 SFNTC (3) \*Plus applicable sales tax

Offer for one "1 for \$3" Gift Certificate good for any Natural American Spirit cigarette product (excludes RYO pouches and 150g tins). Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offer and website restricted to U.S. smokers 21 years of age and older. Limit one offer per person per 12 month period. Offer void in MA and where prohibited. Other restrictions may apply. Offer expires 12/31/17.

No additives in our tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

Organic tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette  
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.