

Review: The Yawpers rock hard and soft on 'Human Question'

This is the band's fourth album

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Denver trio The Yawpers are intense and dynamic on "Human Question," a rambunctious album tracing some of the many paths that rock 'n' roll takes through its deep foundations in the blues.

The band's fourth album encompasses from approximations to white noise and Zeppelin-esque grooves to folksy sentiments and indie jangle in R.E.M./Replacements mode. It's being presented as lead singer Nate Cook's "therapy" record, a more intimate approach than their previous release.

Where "Boy in a Well," from 2017, explored the story of a semi-abandoned newborn in World War I-era France, "Human Questions" often sounds like the rush and chaos of present times.

With exceptions, Cook's



HONS
Bloodshot Records The Yawpers, "Human Question"

traumas seem to be projected on the world, not kept within. "Carry Me," an epic track that goes from whispers to screams, a squawking sax solo and a quiet end, is one of the most personal and straightforward, if close to unrhymed — "Lie to me, it's all I need/Tell me you love me ... And you'll carry me through."

The acoustic center of "Man as Ghost" camouflages an appealing combination of tortured and relaxed, with one of the

album's most haunting, schizophrenic lines — "I'm neighbor with another man/who moves where ever I decide to live."

The title track is another enigmatic highlight echoing the early '70s, while "Dancing on My Knees," possibly about coming to terms with divorce, is bluesy and visceral though only half as much as "Forgiveness Through Pain."

Respite comes with the final two tracks, "Can't Wait," whose title evoking a Replacements classic is not the only similarity, and "Where the Winters End," which could be a rewrite of Bob Dylan's "Forever Young" in elegy mode.

Review: Daniel Norgren rakes politely on trippy, bluesy set

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Daniel Norgren's devotion to American roots music is undisguised on his latest work, "Wooh Dang." But the Swede with the big Scandinavian following is anything but a copycat.

Trippy, edgy and daring, Norgren's first international release makes the case one more time that cross-cultural exploration remains the most fertile frontier in popular music.

It is fresh, rough-edged perfection.

Norgren's music, described in promotional materials as "shredding in the most polite way possible," is a raw mélange of coarsely elegant vocals, gently distorted guitar and piano set

against a backdrop of unhurried bass and drumming.

The opener, "Blue Sky Moon," is a three-minute blend of one-note mood intonations, chirping birds and gentle strumming. Get past that. It might be art but there's not much to it.

The brilliance is yet to come. In its own sweet time.

As the first cut fades into "The Flow," a regal bass line and cymbals give way to gentle, chord-based piano, followed by the most restrained electric guitar. What comes next is a remarkable run of original

songs filled with innovative, blues-based surprises.

Norgren sings of trains and John Wayne movies in what could have sounded trite but is somehow magical here. The lyrics almost don't matter. They are instruments in the soundscape he's creating — one more sign that Norgren has done something distinctive, different and new.

Recorded in a farmhouse in Sweden, this is the kind of low-idle Americana that calms the spirit.

Lie back. Take it in. Listen.

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