

Yo La Tengo's new album worth a second glance, listen

By Josh Krauter
Staff writer

The cover of Yo La Tengo's "And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out" says a lot about the album it adorns.

A cursory glance reveals a quiet neighborhood at night. Cars are parked in the driveway, and the grass is neatly trimmed. Nothing much is going on.

Take a second glance, and the guy in the lower right corner becomes obvious. He is standing in a driveway, holding a six-pack and gazing at a strange light.

The album is just like that cover photo. A cursory listen reveals nothing much but a bunch of slow, indistinct songs, good for background music. But when the listener gives the album a careful listen, he sees what was missed before — intimate, subtle songs that might make the best album of the year.

"And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out" is one of those albums that doesn't resonate at first but deserves repeated listening. It's the kind of album

that reveals more of its secrets as time goes by, instead of shouting all it knows right away, only to end up collecting dust in the bottom of the CD rack.

"Nothing" is the quietest Yo La Tengo album yet, but it's also the warmest. It's full of unexpected melodies, poignant, direct lyrics and inventive musical quirks. Every song is distinct and, more importantly, good. Each song flows into the next.

"Nothing" is not a masterpiece, though. Masterpiece is too abstract a word for such a human album.

The songs are about people and relationships and how people's flaws sometimes cause problems. The lyrics probably are going to come under scrutiny, especially considering guitarist-singer Ira Kaplan and drummer-singer Georgia Hubley have been married for about 10 years.

That relationship is the subject of many of the songs, but the lyrics are so conversational, following the rhythms of real speech, that it's easy to relate.

REVIEW Yo La Tengo

TITLE: And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside Out
LABEL: Matador Records
GRADE: A
FIVE WORDS: Year's best album so far.

In "Our Way to Fall," Kaplan opens a verse with, "I remember your old guitar" and finishes it with, "I remember the day it broke."

In "The Crying of Lot G," Kaplan even makes this line catchy: "You say that all we do is fight/And I think 'Gee, I don't know that that's true'/And then I wonder 'Am I right or is that part of the problem.'"

It's not exactly "baby, you can drive my car," but the simplicity of the words keep them from becoming oppressive.

Though song titles contain nods to such postmodern references as episodes

of "The Simpsons" and Whit Stillman films, the words stick to real life over self-indulgent, pop-culture winks and nudges to the hipper-than-thou set.

The lyrics are only a small part of the album's charm. The music is rich and intriguing.

The band covers an old disco tune, "You Can Have It All," and turns it into melancholy pop by stripping it and leaving a skeletal fragment of the song's original mirror-ball thump-and-grind.

"Tears Are In Your Eyes," a somber ballad that sounds like a late fall afternoon feels, is followed by "Cherry Chapstick," a noisy piece of sour candy that should sound out of place on this otherwise-quiet album, but doesn't. Kaplan attacks the guitar, forcing out squalls of feedback, while the melody brings out a wistful, nostalgic feeling.

"Madeline" is a piece of Bacharachian pop that rivals 1997's "Center of Gravity," and "Tired Hippo" is an experimental instrumental track that actually sounds like a tired hippo



probably would sound.

With its latest release, Yo La Tengo proves that rock bands can age gracefully. The band has been putting out albums since the late 1980s, and this is its best yet.

"And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out" isn't an album that is going to set anyone's party on fire or blast from car stereos all summer. It's a late-night, early-morning, long-drive, alone-in-your-bedroom kind of album.

Dropped Notes

Joan of Arc collaboration to perform at Lied Center

A collaboration of musical artists will perform what has been called "a great masterpiece of contemporary music" this Friday at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

The vocal group Anonymous 4, along with Lincoln's Abendmusik Chorus and The Omaha Symphony will perform Richard Einhorn's "Voices of Light."

"Voices of Light" is a musical composition synchronized to the classic film, "The Passion of Joan of Arc."

Einhorn, a prolific composer for opera, orchestra, chamber, film and dance music, came across the idea to write "Voices of Light" when he visited the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1988.

A still life from the movie "The Passion of Joan of Arc," which he saw in the museum, spurred him to see the film.

After seeing it, he was inspired to do a piece that could capture the emotion he saw coming across in the film.

The piece has been performed more than 50 times in Europe and North America, and the CD was a bestseller on the Billboard classical music chart.

The film, "The Passion of Joan of Arc," was made in France in 1927.

Immediately considered a masterpiece, the film lost its impact as a result of mediocre duplicated images used for nearly 50 years.

It received new attention in the early '80s when the original version was found and re-released.

The musicians corresponding to the film are renowned artists in their own right.

The four women who make up Anonymous 4 have been praised for their amazing vocal skills and have also been included on the Billboard Classical top 10.

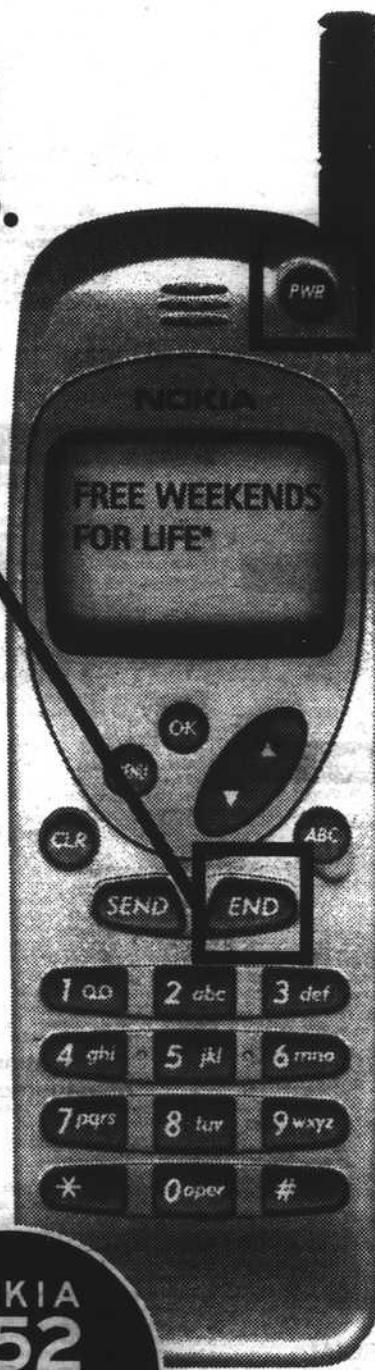
The group will sing the voice of Joan of Arc, which they did on the "Voices of Light" CD and on other tours of the work.

The performance will be directed by John Levick, and the Omaha Symphony will be directed by Victor Yampolsky and resident conductor Ernest Richardson.

Pre-performance talks for "Voices of Light" will take place in the Lied's Steinhart Room 55 minutes and 30 minutes prior to the performance, which is at 8 p.m.

Tickets for the performance are \$33, \$29 and \$25 and half price for UNL students.

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