

**Tonight at the Zoo Bar
Two Shows of the World's Funnest
Band!**



**Indie rockers lost
in battle for CMJ**

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were willing to do whatever it took.

At KRNU, the Interscope folks sent countless copies of that album, T-shirts, a hooded sweatshirt, stickers, posters and basically whatever they could throw at us to put it at No. 1. And we did.

I'd like to say it was on the merits of the album itself because it is excellent. But I can't deny that hearing Interscope Mark pleading over the phone and looking at all the goodies he sent influenced how long that album stayed in our top 30.

And we were probably some of the most honest about it. I guarantee you that the J5 album charted on stations who never played the record. They either caved to the pressure or just wanted more freebies.

Sadly, practices like that are not uncommon, and when genuine independent labels can't compete, they view it as failure.

The indie world has become all about CMJ ranking to the point where it's basically just the majors playing on a different field.

And the independents, for all their intentions and attitude, are no longer independent.

**Barnes easy to hate,
hard not to listen to**

BY NEAL OBERMEYER

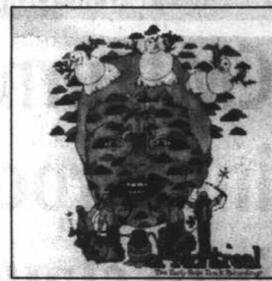
Kevin Barnes, let me count the reasons why I hate you.

Essentially, I hate you for the same reasons I hate your band, known to the world as Of Montreal.

I hate your cutesiness. Not cuteness, mind you. Cuteness is genuine, sincere. You are cutesy. You must try pretty dang hard to simulate cuteness that thoroughly.

I hate your little singing voice. You sound like a chipmunk. You don't even sound like a cool one.

I hate your cutesy little song titles. These things aren't natural. Seriously, you have to have some random adjective-subject-adverb-verb generator to come up with this charming nonsense.



★★★★☆

I hate your album art. Your cutesy little drawings of distorted cartoony faces with all sorts of abstract combinations with unrelated other cartoony crap.

Hate it all, big boy.

So what have you done now, Kevin Barnes? You have released "The Early Four Track Recordings," the demo that got your band a record deal. Only it doesn't include your band. You did it all-by-yourself.

Basically this is "Listen to how good I am; I was this special even before I was making money at it, and I'm so good that I got jobs for those talentless monkeys I call my bandmates too."

And it flawlessly meets all the criteria for Of Montreal-hating. The cover has this cutesy little drawing of a kid's face with green clouds all over it and snowmen climbing out of his hair and little blue men in ties playing with some sort of machinery they're using to measure or monitor his head. Gag me with a spoon.

And the inside has the song names scrawled out of order around this drawing of a naked bird-headed woman with bear heads for breasts???

Oh, and get a load of some of these song titles:

Track 1: "Dirty Dustin Hoffman needs a bath."

Track 5: "Dustin Hoffman does not resist temptation to eat the bathtub."

Track 9: "Dustin Hoffman's wife calls in detective to dust for porcelain particles on Dustin Hoffman's tongue."

And wouldn't you know it, in spite of all 16 songs mentioning Dustin Hoffman, not one is about the Rain Man. Pisses me off, that does.

But Kevin Barnes, the reason I hate you the most is because of the songs themselves. You write some of the prettiest acoustic-based lo-fi pop songs since the '60s.

You write songs that make me want to drive around the block with the windows down. They make me want to have a picnic with my girlfriend. Even though it's really cold outside.

They have chirpiness and charm that would make Brian Wilson smile. A sincere smile, mind you. Not that sort of mindless half-smirk he has all the time now since he lost his mind.

But they also have a darker element, the way that sometimes the tape sounds like it's dragging a hair, distorting sounds and dropping notes in an out of tune. The eerie background noises, xylophones, distant drums and just overall bizarreness that puts you right up with your psychedelic Elephant 6 peers.

You did this on 4 tracks at home, and I hate you for that, too.

And I hate that your band has an album of brand-new cutesy crap coming out in the spring that I will hate too.

I hate that I keep putting this CD in, on repeat no less.

And I hate that, in this subtle reversal, this review has become as predictably ironic as you.

And I hate that you're never going to read this, so I'm basically talking to myself.

And I hate that I forgot to actually count all the reasons I hate you.

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