

# Eye on Entertainment

## Album Review: Vampire Weekend's Contra

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Ah, the sophomore album. After a stellar debut, many bands suffer from a lack of ability to deliver on their second release. Could it be that their initial record was just too good and they can do nothing to live it to the hype or does the sophomore slump truly exist? Vampire Weekend's *Contra* suggests the latter. A band that usurped and redefined the genre of college rock, Vampire Weekend's self-titled first album was a rare gem cut from the origins of completely different musical styles (namely: African pop and Western classic), it transcended the line between the line between the kind of music people consume like candy and the kind that's just plain difficult to swallow (which explains its mixed levels of acceptance from the laymen and music critics alike).

In any case, the album made an impact that was sure to resonate with the audience of today and many began to speculate that the band could not duplicate what they had accomplished on Vampire Weekend. Well, those people were right and they didn't duplicate it --- they trumped it. It's not to say they've retreated from their old habits, *Contra* is full of the same lyrical silliness and a very familiar complex simplicity that Ezra Koenig and the boys have been utilizing since their debut. In fact, the structure of the music's ante has been upped to a very obvious degree and the lyrics seem to be more apt for the middle man, instead of the somewhat high-class rhetoric they chose to showcase on their debut. The music is full of more sounds and is altogether a more pleasant experi-

ence, full of sophisticated hooks and catchy choruses.

"Horchata", the original single and preceding album-opener, is a wacky Ezra-esque tune that shows its hand from the beginning and begs you to dance over the chiming keyboard, classic back-drop and clapping drum line, as Ezra belts the most

ents. Vampire Weekend at their pop-punk-iest.

The rest of the album is a happy medium between the two presented styles, blended with the seemingly countless numbers of possibilities for song productions this band carries. "Diplomat's Son", a song about an empty house-crashing aristocrat's adventures, samples a simple M.I.A. beat and constructs something effortless and warm around it and "California English" employs the aforementioned unconventional lyrics while name-dropping the title of their album, "Someone took a trip before you came to ski in the Alps. Your father moved across the country. Just to sunburn his scalp. Contra Costa, Contra Mundum, contradict what I say. Living like the French Connection, but we'll die in LA.", a verse that spirals directly into the euphoria that is the chorus of the song. "Giving Up The Gun" is a shiny pop-gem that is just begging to be exploited for cinema and the closer, "I Think Ur a Contra", takes the popfest out on a slow and solemn note with an acoustic guitar and heavy keyboard taps.

*Contra* addresses every notion that the critics of their first album had when they labeled it an act of overdone, exaggerated music perpetuated by snobby punks looking for recognition. *Contra* asks you to open your mind and broaden your horizons for the sake of the music of the future's cultural and social expansion. Something to which hardly anyone can hold a legitimate "contra" against.



Photo courtesy of rawkblog.net

bizarre lyrics Vampire Weekend has ever presented in a song. Arguably the best song on the album, Cousins (the second single), blends joyful guitars with a pounding bass that threatens to ruin the song, but just plain never does, and pres-

## Infinite Playlist Ode to Bowen

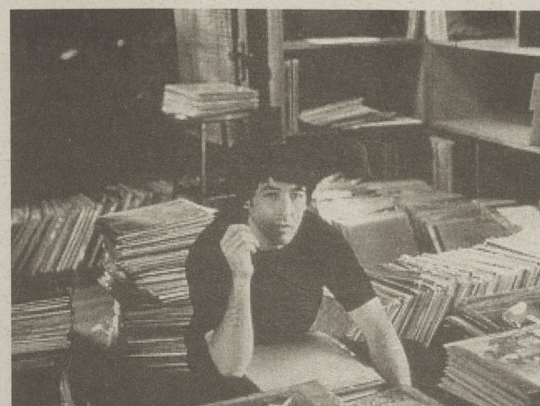
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**\*Disclaimer: Caitlin Olszewski does not endorse 80's hair bands but I hear Bowen totally digs Bret Michaels.**

1. "Search and Destroy" - Iggy Pop
2. "You Make My Dreams Come True" - Hall & Oates
3. "Superman" - The Kinks
4. "Nothin' but a Good Time" - Poison
5. "Here I Go Again" - Whitesnake
6. "Bowie" - Flight of the Concorde
7. "Shout at the Devil" - Mötley Crüe
8. "Nobody's Fool" - Cinderella
9. "My Hero" - Foo Fighters
10. "I've Done Everything For You" - Rick Springfield

Top Photo Courtesy of Karrie Bowen's Facebook page

Bottom Photo Courtesy of seattlest.com



## NOW PLAYING: The Lovely Bones

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The *Lovely Bones* is a story about a young girl who is murdered and her family tries to solve the mystery and seek justice. Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz, Susan Sarandon, Stanley Tucci, and Saoirse Ronan star in this thrilling movie takes you on an emotional roller coaster. The characters create moments that grab the audience and engross them in their anguish and then pull them into their revelations and happiness. And for those of you who have read *The Lovely Bones* previously, the movie is still worth seeing despite the fact you already know who the villain is.

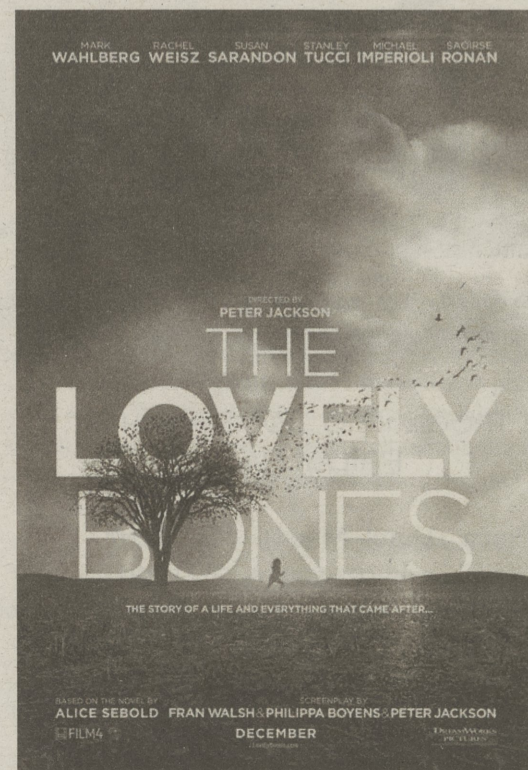


Photo courtesy of moviephone.com