

Eye on Entertainment

Album Review: Local Natives' Gorilla Manor

By Chris DiIenno - Lion's Eye Entertainment Editor - cad5241@psu.edu

So few bands are content with the art of making music. Indeed, commercialization and exploitation, among other 'ations', have been pigeon-holing any and every music genre for as long as they possibly could. Much of what we call success today is really a more eloquent form of pandering that is ingested and spat out by the masses, so it's good to see that there are still a select number of bands that are still simply playing music for the sake of the act itself, many of these bands belonging to the 'alternative' genre, a rather forced moniker that has quite a blurred distinction and an even more fuzzy 'family' tree.

One of these bands goes by the name Local Natives. You could argue that since this is their debut album, they haven't had time to succumb to the limelight the way countless bands had done after exceptional first tries. But giving them the benefit of the doubt on this occasion I commend them for creating an evocative, immersive and sometimes juvenile (in the best way possible) debut album, Gorilla Manor.

Local Natives wear their influences on their sleeves while remaining relatively distinct in the same fashion. A savvy music buff will hear a good deal of the Beach Boys in their music (but then again, where can you find a place to hide from Brian Wilson and the gang anymore?). The West-coast punk vibe flows throughout the entire album without ever really taking a sharp dip into the class itself and the noise that encompasses the background environment is reminiscent of an easygoing No Age mixed with a less serious Grizzly Bear and a dash of the breakdown power of Cymbals Eat Guitars, though not nearly as rugged. Local Natives aren't exactly coming out of left field with Gorilla Manor, in fact, this is exactly the kind of album one would expect from the beachy, baroque-esque semi-punk scene of the West coast. But after listening through a few times you realize that's probably the best thing this band has going for it. Recorded in a shack in Orange County, known for parties, which they named Gorilla Manor (in case you were wondering where the title came from), the album is accessible (invitational, if you will) to all walks of life.

Album opener "Wide Eyes" treads through relentlessly soft drums and chants, channeling a crunchy bass line and an overbearing percussion rhythm (which plays a huge part throughout the album).



Photo courtesy of last.fm.com

"Sun Hands" is a single that does exactly what a single should do: entice. The rhythms are simple, as is the song itself up until the breakdown near the end that, at first, feels a tad uncalled for, but I promise that it will grow on you, it certainly grew on me (now my favorite part of the entire album).

"Airplanes" was the second single from the album (with "Sun Hands" being the first). The song is actually Kelcey Ayer, a multi-tasker in the band (vocals/percussion/keyboard) singing about how badly he wishes he could have met his grandfather who died before he was born while invoking the most moving lyrics of the album, "I bet when I leave my body for the sky, the wait will be worth it."

"Shape Shifter" is a moody, brooding tune that slows down the tempo on everything but the chorus and stops to reflect on the beauty of the Native's ability to literally "shapeshift" a song from feathery to powerful with just the flick of a guitar pick.

There's a Talking Heads cover "Warning Sign", a song about optimism in the face of global adversity "World News" and even a song about accepting the beliefs of every person while remaining true to yourself "Who Knows Who Cares" (a cliché concept that the Native's were able to turn into a colorful, albeit naïve personal reflection that thrives on the vocal harmonies of the two singers (aforementioned Ayer along with Taylor Rice)).

The album closes with "Sticky Thread" a song that sums up the album in its entirety and goes down as easy as a closer can on most occasions. "So much is said without a sound." sings Rice, a statement that seems to almost contradict the picturesque noise of this debut. Local Natives were able to take the overdone elements of a few zip codes worth of musical styles and condense them into a youthful conquest for self-efficacy in an environment that tends to make the individual seem insignificant.

Unfortunately, the Native's cancelled their show in Philadelphia so they could play two shows in New York (a move that I couldn't find the willpower to research, worried I'd find some ostentatious disparagement of the Philly venues that have been my second home for years). Their live show is reportedly stellar, so hopefully they reconsider and come visit the better city of the two. Yeah, I said it!

How is a Raven Like a Writing Desk?

Alice in Wonderland Movie Review

By Kyrstin Camp - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - ksc5136@psu.edu

Many were disappointed when they went in expecting a continuation of the children's Disney movie but were met with a version of the book instead. The movie gives a quick background of Alice herself, who is now a teenager, and slowly explains Wonderland and shows how she slowly realizes her destiny of ending the Red Queens tyranny by defeating the Jabberwocky. With the help of this movie (for those who have read the books) you gain a better understanding of the second book, as well as how Disney's representation was not all correct. Many of the incidents that took place in the cartoon version were incidents from both stories and not in chronological order. Overall, I enjoyed the movie for its plot as well as its amazing visual aspects.

The casting choice was stellar, (all except for one) and everyone had a huge part in making this movie so enticing. Depp's performance was as always, on point and amazing. His character of the Mad Hatter captured many hearts with his quirky actions and speech. He did an amazing job and throughout the movie you can see the chemistry between himself and Alice. The Red Queen played by Helena Bonham-Cart-

er was the comic relief through out many scenes. As many of her characters, she was a big headed, over the top loud mouth and personally I loved her performance. She manages to say the most ridiculous things with such a straight face and all you can do is laugh. Mia Wasikowska who played Alice seemed like the wrong fit at first but then she grew on to many audience members. She played the stubborn defiant girl from the children's movie we all remember, but with a much different twist. The only character that I personally had a problem with was Anne Hathaway's. She played the White Queen who is a very dainty and overdramatic type and Anne didn't really capture it for me. She did all of her overacting right, but SHE just didn't look like she was a good fit for the part.

Film Junk. Com states, "This is obviously not as strong as Burton's earlier work" which can be hotly debated. They also gave the movie a sad 2 1/2 stars. On the other hand, The Internet Movie Database gave the movie a nice 7/10. The map is scattered on opinions of this movie. But either for plot of aesthetic feeling, you will love it.

Dear Blu

Dear Blu,

For the past few months I have been spending a lot of time with my girl friend since I broke up with my boyfriend of two years. My girl friend and I have known one another of the past 3 years. I guess one would consider us to be best friends. During my relationship with my ex-boyfriend she and I never hung out that much... considering she just graduated and started a new job and I've been busy too. Now it seems like you can't pull us apart. I really care for her and are beginning to establish feelings for her more than I think one friend should for another and just remain friends. This is the first time I've ever had "these" types of feelings. Please help me. I don't want to ruin our relationship but I can't help how I feel.

-Terribly Confused.

Dear terribly confused,
Wow, you certainly are on an emotional rollercoaster. I'm sorry to hear that you broke up with your boyfriend, I know that can be very hard on a person. I'm glad to hear that you're spending time with someone else to help take your mind off things. I am however a little concerned about your new found feelings. Not that there's anything wrong with feeling that way, but simply because you've just been hurt. You need to take some time and think about do you really care for her in that way because that's how you've always felt. Or is she the first person to treat you special since your break-up and she's your "rebound." I recommend that you go out on a few dates just to see if u still have those feelings. If you do feel the same way, then consider telling your friend. Before you do understand and think about her possible reactions....and if you think you still have those feelings....Go for it! I wish you the best of luck and hope this situation works-out for you.

Live life and don't let it pass you by....

As always your friend,

Blu