

Mp3 The Beige - 01



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an atmospheric pop quintet: understated, wry, jazzy with off-kilter pop leanings. "A gorgeously spacious thing.... as melodic and lyrically striking as Wilco at its most incisive" --Ken Eisner, the Georgia Straight, Vancouver 8 MP3 Songs POP: Quirky, POP: Folkly Pop Details: the beige's music is understated, atmospheric, wry and jazzy with off-kilter pop leanings, but sometimes not. some beige pieces have words, others don't. the quintet's live shows feature broad strokes of improvisation. the beige complement most interiors. Recent praise for the debut cd "01": "The Beige is a new musical force in Vancouver" -- Marke Andrews, Vancouver Sun. "The result is a disc of literate roots-pop for urban dwellers, with a we-get-there-when-we-do attitude that coalesces into dusty, lovely ballads." -- Shawn Conner, Vancouver Courier. "Moody atmosphere in a tight ensemble sound" -- Tom Harrison, Vancouver Province. "A gorgeously spacious thing.... as melodic and lyrically striking as Wilco at its most incisive--and more overtly catchy." -- Ken Eisner, The Georgia Straight. instead of trying to recreate a live performance for their debut cd, 01, the beige applied an improv approach to the recording/mixing process itself. they experimented with subtle loops and the odd field recording. it's an understated production. while 01 captures the atmospheric quality of the beige, all in all it's a quiet, layered album with few special effects. they did almost all their own stunts, but the beige's 01 does feature guest appearances by some of vancouver's finest musicians. A recent article about the beige in The Georgia Straight: Thursday, August 3 The Beige is anything but bland By Ken Eisner When the lights went down at the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre on July 22, listeners packed into the Star Theatre were treated to an intensely introspective set from the Beige. Their music might be called shoegazing, although the Vancouver bands sound is too rootsy for that label. Anyway, circumstances made listeners look up, not down. It was almost pitch black, recalled Beige guitarist Jon Wood the next afternoon, but that just made the audience stare at the ceiling

more intently. We could barely see our instruments, but it was probably the best show we've ever done. While fans were fixed on projections of Andromeda and the Crab Nebula, the five-piece outfit explored the celestial limits of its debut CD, called 01 despite a notably analogue sound. Further paradoxes appeared in the setting, principally because of offering a night of amateur astronomy to people following musicians who have no interest in being stars. Three of the five members—including founder, guitarist, and lead singer-songwriter Rick Maddocks—are balding, bookish-looking fellows. We don't even know how to get into the whole marketing thing, Maddocks told the Georgia Straight a few days earlier, while sipping iced coffee outside a Fairview Slopes caf. He was joined there by Wood, who mostly plays lap-steel and tenor guitars, and relative newcomer Mark Haney, whose acoustic double bass helps ground songs that could otherwise float heavenward. Certainly, some of the spacier parts of the record, like long instrumental passages in the opening So Near and closing Nobody Nowhere, can get quite ethereal. Bits of banjo, cello, and trumpet waft through the tunes, which also feature Geoff Gilliards restrained drumming and Andrew Aridas luxuriously retro-sounding keyboards. The self-produced session, mixed and mastered by Wood, is a gorgeously spacious thing. Other numbers, like the anthemic Mirror, folksy Hammer in a Bell, and romantically swooning One for Me are as melodic and lyrically striking as Wilco at its most incisive and more overtly catchy. The lyric part certainly connects with the Welsh-born Maddocks's other artistic hat, as a published author. His novel, Sputnik Diner, was put out by Knopf Canada five years ago, to glowing reviews nationwide. The Globe and Mail comment that his writing carries strong echoes of dirty-realist American writers like Tobias Wolff and Frederick Barthelme could be applied to the music as well. And you'd have to add Hank Williams, Tim Buckley, and Bruce Springsteen to that list of modern Americana. Actually, it all started with ads in the back of the Georgia Straight, Wood said after the show. Rick, Andrew, and I all met through classified ads and played together through the years. And we met Geoff pretty soon after. The band name, which supports the idea that these anti-poseurs would just as soon stay in the background, came fairly late in the game. According to the jeans-clad Wood, who is naturally inclined toward the dry put-on, the handle came about because everyone else was wearing Dockers at their first few rehearsals. It started as a kind of joke, Wood continued. But it's taken on a life of its own. You say it often enough, and it starts sounding more, I don't know, colourful. Well, it has that basic neutrality, Maddocks said in his own interview, but it reflects the music, in a way. It's not a sound that knocks you over the head when you walk into the room. It's more like overhearing a quiet

conversation; if you want to get sucked in, you can. The bands stargazing began with monthly gigs at the Montmartre Caf on Main Street. Its really been a long, slow process of developing this highly instrumental sound, Wood explained. And that began a while before Mark joined the band. At first, we werent really concerned with what anybody thought of it. We thought If nobody listens, then whatever. This is interesting to us. But people seemed to like it, so we were taken by surprise. They got less chatty as things went along. We all sit down, except for Mark, in a semicircle, Maddocks explained. And this has changed the writing process as well. We started out with fairly well structured songs. Now it tends to be more fragmentary, but theres just way more space to work with. And space, to paraphrase the late Sun Ra, seems to be the place where they live.

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