

Mp3 Satellite Lot - Second Summer



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Debut by Satellite Lot, described as "a veritable masterpiece, full of melancholy-pop, ethereal song constructions and honest soul." 11 MP3 Songs POP: Quirky, ROCK: Psychedelic Details: David Gurney of tinymixtapes.com: "The exuberance of the opening guitar lick (and I do mean lick) on Satellite Lot's Second Summer is like a cool blast of water hitting your face unexpectedly in the middle of the dog days of summer. Its presence sets "That Wasn't Me" soaring into the pop-rock stratosphere. It's a pure moment, but a deceptive one to be sure. For when one delves more deeply into Second Summer, there's little of that unbridled joy to be found, and instead two young songwriters with a touch of lovesickness are hiding there, slyly attempting to bare their confused souls to the willing listener. Of course, it's never as easy as that. There's a lot of ground covered over the course of 11 songs, from the jazzed-out sad-sac balladry of "The First Day" to the rip-snortin' Springsteenisms of "Hold Your Fire." Yet, underlying every stylistic shift, grunt, and croon are the travails of youthful longing being snuffed out -- the realization that love and creativity won't flow as easily as one might have hoped it could. Lucky for us that Satellite Lot are incredibly talented at conveying such emotions and that the chameleon-like shells of the compositions are always crafted with the utmost care. These are songs that almost make one yearn for the pangs of unrequited or failed love. A line like "May I propose a toast to those who love too much/ You'll destroy everything you touch" snuck in at the end of "Battle to Be One," the album's heartfelt paean to the competitive undercurrents that can devour relationships, will have you wanting to raise a glass to celebrate the sorry state of adult affairs. But lingering on only the anguish of the lyrics doesn't do service to the music. So much ground is covered, though not in an overreaching manner. While these boys and their cadre of musicians have the chops to pull off just about anything they set their mind to, it never feels forced or out of place. The throbbing down tempo dance feel to "Double Yellow Lines" seemingly comes

out of nowhere among the largely rock-oriented material, but it breathes itself so organically into the flow of the album that only the most curmudgeonly of rock purists would begrudge its dark-tinged synth pop. The only moment on the album that falls out of step is the somewhat awkwardly mixed intro to "In Protest" where the sweeping, and mildly intrusive, drum-led intro pulls one out of the flow, but then only slightly, as it quickly settles into an epic and spacey folk song. Even this does little to tarnish the luminosity of the debut effort by Satellite Lot, an effort that triumphantly heralds the coming of age of a great pop-rock band yearning for an even mix of honest lyrical expression and unbounded musical curiosity." From Sam Pfeifle for the Portland Phoenix: "For watchers of Portland's indie-rock community, Satellite Lot were in danger of becoming more myth than reality. There have been whispers for years, promises of an album from a band than many pegged as one of the scene's most interesting and inventive. They were part Devo, part Mr Bungle, part Beatles, with a feel as much for songwriting as performance and entertainment, and in love with their keyboards and computers. The Lot ended up as just two, Casey McCurry and Aaron Hautala, and they toiled away, recording and writing in their practice space and homes, at one point reimagining themselves as an all-vocals pop outfit, by one rumor. Samples of their work would be issued, the album would be discussed, they would go back underground. In the last three months, however, things seem almost magically to have come together in indie-pop perfection. They've completed, mastered, and shipped their debut album, *Second Summer*, and it is a veritable masterpiece, full of melancholy-pop, ethereal song constructions and arrangements, and honest soul. I was totally hooked from the first few bars. "That Wasn't Me" opens the album with a guitar piece like a kid practicing the coolest riff he ever thought up, in his bedroom, just slightly lo-fi. Then we enter into the song proper, with Hautala coining a wavering country pop, "I let me pride get carried away," slow and chill, full of real regret, then bursting into a rocking "until it strangled everything/ Whether you liked me or not (ot-ot) these days [complete with indie-rock warble]/ I pretend that wasn't me." So much else on *Second Summer* is straight-ahead broken heart that this opener could easily just be one of many love songs that populate a nostalgic album of girlfriends past. At least the breakup with Satellite Lot members past was an amiable one. Members Chris Burns, Travis Bernier, and Jason Ingalls all make contributions to the album, along with what seems like half of the Portland music scene. Ingalls and Burns play drums and bass, respectively, on "Blessed with a Curse," which features a mockingly high-voiced opening, sarcastic and cutting: "You don't need to tell me how intelligent you are." The tune continues, alternately sweet and bitter, desperate and angry, and

features a cool "oh, oh, oh-ah-ohhhhh" segue that easily could have come off Pet Sounds. Later, "your lies (hah)/ disgrace (hah)" features yells from audioblack's Jason Beal and Jason Leone, as they lend their heavy aesthetic to the song - Ingalls matches them, drums just heavy-handedly pounding, like someone punching the heavy bag to relieve stress and frustration. Bernier chimes in later by providing the acoustic-guitar foundation to "In Protest," an ethereal tune that seems more like the old Lot, though infused with some of the same melancholy sentiment as the newer stuff. A descending keyboard line drops in from the sky, a bass drum booms in (William Fernald), ghostly vocals fade to back and rise to front over a military drum-roll on the snare and a flute (or something), also old-timey military - then, is that an accordion? Why not? The song screams soundscape, like what you hear when epic movies are panning over great plains full of buffalo. McCurry and Hautala don't need help, though. They play parts aplenty on "All Defenses Down," riffing off echoed vocals by the crystal-voiced Sydney Bourke, "rising from the water." The soft pop of the chorus, particularly the delivery on "so feel your insides out for a while," is so delicious you can taste it, as is the vampy indie/country/pop construction that follows a line like "two strangers pass on a dusty road." Bourke also stands out on the album's finisher, "By Lantern Light," a crushing heartbreaker that gets you from note one. Bourke's ultra-high soprano cuts like an icy wind coming off the water in January before Hautala joins her like a warm embrace for the second half of each of the first two verses. It's a song for ghosts and spirits, piano and drums building and joined by keyboards that depart - cymbals crash, melodies build and repeat, the song hypnotizes. What a contrast to the album's other real ear-catcher, "Hold Your Fire," like Bruce Springsteen covered by Meatloaf on an album produced by Prince. It's the little things that will win you over here: a light children's xylophone plucking out notes in the background; the boy's longing that comes with "oh, I was so crazy about you"; the fuzzed-out guitar solo paired with the clean drum sound they note was captured by Mark Bartholomew at Tsunami Sound. Every detail is attended to here, yet the album never feels less than organic and evolving. The piano ballads shimmer, the Depeche Mode homages drive and burn, a dirge like "Keepin' You" comes complete with vocals affected and deep in the background, behind appropriate organs to open, before stepping up into an '80s synth number in half-time. What makes it all work? Maybe it's the bass drum calling out like a heartbeat, "thump, thump-thump." Oh yeah, there's plenty of heart on this record."

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