

Mp3 Spinning Swords - We're Trying So Hard



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Lo-fi psych-folk 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Psych-folk, COUNTRY: Alt-Country Show all album songs: We're Trying So Hard Songs Details: SPINNING SWORDS We're Trying So Hard 2006 Self-Released myspace.com/spinningswords Style: lo-fi indie folk We're Trying so Hard sounds like it was recorded in a big empty room with wood floors, full of echoes. Not that there's anything wrong with that, I'm a big fan of the Mountain Goats early recordings, most of which John Darnielle recorded in his bedroom on a boom box, and Hard sounds much better than that. But the truth is, I have no idea where it was recorded, much less who was involved. Willfully stingy with information, the CD liner says only that all songs were written and recorded by the Spinning Swords. Even their MySpace page, which for most bands gives you more than you need or want, remains secretive. Given that Marty Finkel is the recorder and producer listed and since I have reviewed two of his CDs, my guess is the Swords are just an alias. And if past history is any indication, he acted alone. Several ghosts haunt this CD. The obvious one is lyrically; song two bears the title "I Fell in Love with a Ghost" and starts with haunting (not to be mistaken for frightening) moans. By the end the tables have been turned and the narrator is the one doing the haunting, "I'm just a specter now/ I'm living under your house/ I'm now the king among thieves/ I'll breath into you my disease," he confesses as the plink of a toy piano sounds in the distance. The piano isn't the only intriguing instrumentation to dot the Swords' musical landscape, melodica, xylophone and maraca fill the spaces left by the acoustic guitar. Standout track "There's Magic in the Walls" could have been swiped from Dietrich Gosser's songbook. A stark and undeniably unsettling song, there are haunts here as well, "I hear a dog bark down the hall/ But Duke's been dead for years." Shiver. The second ghost recurring in these songs is that of Elliott Smith, which may be the most convincing evidence yet of this being a Marty Finkel effort. Another highlight, "Allamy Park" ripples with Either/Or style guitar phrases and Smith-worthy lyrics.

"There's an empty feeling/ But at least my notebook's full/ Empty stomach and forgotten dreams/ You'll only think more if there's less of me," may be the smartest on a record awash with clever couplets. The spirit of Appalachian folk songs also hangs over much of this effort, "Blue Eyed Wonder" and "The Hunting Song" sound eerily timeless. For fans of the lo-fi folk of bands like the Mountain Goats or the Lesser Birds of Paradise, and obviously those of Elliott Smith, it would be worth your time to check out We're Trying so Hard, even if its creator remains a bit of a mystery. Kiki Schueler

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