

Mp3 Umbrella Tree - The Church & The Hospital



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Bohemian bookworm prog-pop. 11 MP3 Songs POP: Baroque Pop, ROCK: Avant-Prog Details: Umbrella Trees sophomore album *The Church The Hospital* opens with a scream literally. A unison howl prefaces a crash of music. Never a band to allow their audience to get too comfortable, this local threesome mixes moments of alarming beauty with calculated, cacophonous noise. And here the palette has grown even richer the louds are even louder and the pretty parts often transcendently beautiful. The source of that powerful dichotomy is the relationship between the band's two singers: keyboardist Jillian Lee and guitarist Zachary Gresham. The petite blonde and the tall bearded guy in suspenders are an odd pair, visually and vocally. Lee has a sweet, exquisitely controlled vocal instrument, while Gresham's appeal lies in his expressive, shrill warble. Together, they interweave tricky harmonies and call-and-response chants the musical equivalent of good cop-bad cop. Last year's debut *What Kind of Books Do You Read?* announced the trio as a force on the local rock scene. With their first full-length, they had what any up-and-coming band would kill for: a clearly defined, unique sensibility. On *Church*, recorded at BattleTapes in East Nashville, engineer Jeremy Ferguson brings the band's complex ambitions to life. Connecting such disparate ideas may seem like a quixotic task, but the proficient playing and the tight production make it work. It's particularly impressive given the brevity of the songs nearly half come in at under three minutes, yet they're anything but lean. This is partially due to the band's literary, quirky breed of rock, rife with motifs and recurring images: churches, hospitals and ailments of all sorts. Here, the church influence is not only ideological but sonic, with echoes in the singing, harmonies and gothic instrumentation. On the bridge of *Make Me a Priest*, we get a cappella in what sounds like Latin, and on *The Monk The Nun*, Gresham promises, I am using my in-church voice. But this latest record also brings some refreshing new tricks to the table. Intermixed with the classical instruments and nostalgic sounds

are meticulously employed electronic elements. On the stunning instrumental Jellyfish Evaporate, the momentous, swelling opening is speckled with barely audible electronic bleeps the kind that, if you're listening while driving, might make you check your blind spot for a nearby reversing semi on first listen that gradually overtake and eventually dominate. The song opens with the hum of church bells and closes with a robot chorus a triumph of technology over beauty. Lees A Horse That Will Come When I Whistle was What Kind of Books Do You Read's iconic track a deliciously coy performance. She made the song's opening question which became the album's title simultaneously sinister and sexy, and even precocious. Here, her creepy closer The Youngest Apple has a similar elusiveness. But instead of subversive sensuality, this tale of an unwanted baby sister's death has the ambiguous charm of a gothic orphanage bedtime story. Other highlights include the dynamic 10:54 (the swirling organ toward the end is the album's most smile-inducing moment) and Smells/Bells, the longest track at five minutes, and one of the strongest showcases for the leading duos wonderful harmonies. More than once, The Church The Hospital made me think of author Ray Bradbury master of understatement hidden in opulence. Like that craftsman, this band's talent lies in indulgence, in packing as much information and as many ideas as possible into a tight, polished space. In their temerity, they find great power. A song in German? Why not? Another in French? Sure! Best local release of 2008 to date? Most definitely. -Lee Stabert, Nashville Scene, week of 19 February 2008

UMBRELLA TREE There aren't many bands around brave enough or musically able to create a concept work as challenging as that of The Church The Hospital (Cephalopod), which is the new CD from the Nashville rock group Umbrella Tree. Structured in operatic fashion with intersecting themes, related characters and an intriguing concept, this doesn't sound like anything else on the local scene, and as individualistic and edgy as anything coming from anyone nationally as well. -City Paper Nashville, 21 Feb 2008

PROG-POP TRIO UMBRELLA TREE UNLEASH A FULL BLOWN CONCEPT ALBUM Most local rock scene followers could have predicted that prog-pop trio Umbrella Tree would let its theatrical leanings foster a full-blown concept album, and that's just what the band has done. You might even dare call it a "rock opera," if you convince yourself that you've latched onto a plot. And yes, The Church and the Hospital impresses with its cohesiveness, not only in its theme, but in the symbiotic playing style the band has developed. The spirit of connecting scenes and characters goes hand in hand with assembling increasingly focused tunes with fluid vocals and airtight arrangements. Unlike the intensely quirky, piecemeal vignettes found on debut album What Kind of Books Do You Read?, a track like "Nursing the

Patience" does just that retaining all the garish music-hall charm of their old work but ignoring kooky, song-diverting impulses. If Arcade Fire collided violently with the Fiery Furnaces, you might be halfway near Church's sound, but that still ends up selling short this band's truly singular pop. -Dave Paulson, All the Rage Nashville, week of 19 February 2008 People who are interested in Pixies The Fiery Furnaces Arcade Fire should consider this download.

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