## **Mp3 Gazillion - Best Kept Secret**



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Piano and vocal based folk/rock in the style of The Wallflowers and Counting Crows. 14 MP3 Songs POP: Piano, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: From RIFT Magazine: It's an unwritten rock and roll rule that most bands consisting of college-age members will end up living together for at least some amount of time. The houses that they occupy tend to be the scourge of the neighborhood, the targets of countless noise complaints and late night visits from police. The unassuming house on Fairmount Ave. in St. Paul, occupied by the members of Gazillion, is no exception. Singer/songwriter Simon Fuerstenberg, bassist Marshall Fassino, guitarist John McConville and drummer Michael Barthman have been wreaking havoc on this peaceful neighborhood for about four months now. "It seems like most of our neighbors love to come over and listen when we practice," Fuerstenberg says. "I don't know who's calling the cops." The members of Gazillion are gathered in their living room, chain-smoking cigarettes and drifting between answering questions about their band and arguing about whether Scott Weiland (of Velvet Revolver) and Chris Cornell (of Audioslave) should trade places in their respective super groups. This is just another day in the life of a young band on the rise. They still have day jobs, they still go to college, and they still feel reasonably certain that they're about to become the biggest thing in the world. These four friends each contribute their own ideas and talents to the band, and Gazillion wouldn't be the same without that democratic creative process. "Each one of the guys is special in their own way," Barthman said. "That honestly is the best way to describe it." Gazillion have been a buried treasure in the Twin Cities music scene for about three years. Originally formed in 2002 by Fuerstenberg, the group's current line-up has been together the longest, and has recorded two albums together. The first, Growth, sold over one thousand copies locally and helped to establish a loyal fan-base that has been expanding ever since. "We recently discovered that we have a fan club in Duluth," Fuerstenberg admits. "We haven't even played

there yet." After nearly two years, the follow-up to Growth was finally released on October 12th with two shows at 7th Street Entry. Constructed in the home studio of producer Scott Jarrett (Willie Nelson, Fiona Flanagan), Best Kept Secret took more than a year to complete. It has been highly anticipated by the band's extensive fan-base, explains Fassino: "We've had to keep telling people, 'it'll be ready soon, just wait, it won't be much longer.' We've been doing that for months. But we wanted this one to be done right, no matter how long it took." Best Kept Secret is an epic album filled with equal parts sing-along anthems and mellow sonnets. It may be one of the most palatable and market-ready albums to come from an unsigned band this year. The members of Gazillion clearly know that, but they're cautious about getting their hopes too high. Barthman sums it up best: "Our goal was to make the kind of record that we would want to go out and buy ourselves, and we did. I would definitely buy this album. I realize how clich that sounds but I don't know how else to say it. We're really proud of this one." The group's inventive folk/rock sound and glistening vocal harmonies have helped set them apart from the local competition. In an atmosphere of sound-alike rock bands that seem focused on trying to blow each other offstage with volume, Gazillion is beautifully crafted music for people who love beautifully crafted music. "Our focus is just to write great songs; it always has been;" says McConville. "Once we got the hang of that, we knew that we had something special." Gazillion's live performances have a depth of drama and passion that most bands don't develop before spending years playing arenas. At recent shows the group has played to standing room only audiences who seem to know all the lyrics to every song. They are regularly called back for encores. "Every show we play is for 50,000 people," Fuerstenberg says, dead serious. "Even if it's a coffee shop, we play like it's Madison Square Garden." McConville agrees, "It's really important that we connect with our audience. We want them to have the best possible experience, no matter what." With the release the Best Kept Secret, the band plans to hit the road and sell the record the old fashioned way. one audience member at a time. Starting with a series of local television and radio appearances throughout the fall, Gazillion will then embark on an ever-expanding tour of the country. "We expect to be out there playing as much as possible for the next year or so," Fassino says. "We have the time, we have the ambition, and most importantly we have a record that we really believe in."

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