

Mp3 The Proper Nouns - A Million Hurtful Things



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Intelligent pop rock which remains firmly rooted in British post-punk while maintaining a punk edge. 14 MP3 Songs POP: Pop/Rock, ROCK: Garage Rock Details: The Proper Nouns formed circa 2002 as a trio, with Phil Francis on drums, Travis Kokas on bass and vocals, and Matt Ogborn on guitar and vocals. Phil and Travis had played in the Cusacks, a great, under-appreciated Columbus pop band that Matt had the fortune to befriend after moving to Columbus from Chicago in 2000. The Proper Nouns recorded a self-titled EP in Matt's basement in 2004. Sometime after that, the Cusacks' former bass player and singer, Dave Gibson, joined the band on keyboards. Together with Dave they recorded a full-length CD, *Birds Butterflies*, at Columbus Discount Recording in 2005. Columbus Discount Records released the record in February of 2006. Shortly after the record came out, Dave left the band and Justin Riley, also of the Terribly Empty Pockets, stepped into the breach on keyboards. Their newest record, *A Million Hurtful Things*, to be released by All Hail Records in May of 2008, was recorded in two separate sessions at Columbus Discount Recording in 2006 and 2007. Justin then recorded additional tracks and extensively mixed the record, which he mastered with Jay Alton. The band is thrilled to pieces to be joining the All Hail Records family. REVIEWS Two years after releasing their first full-length album (*Birds Butterflies*) on Columbus Discount, Columbus Proper Nouns have returned with *A Million Hurtful Things*, their first release on upstart local label All Hail Records. Though the boys at CDR recorded most of the album and the relationship between the label/studio and the band appears to be intact, the shift in headquarters seems to make sense stylistically. The Nouns precise pop doesnt mesh very well with the rougher textures of bands like Necropolis and El Jesus De Magico (however unfair the pigeonholing may be), and as they are a bit unique in the Columbus scene, the association with a more varied label like All Hail (Paper Airplane, Electric Grandmother, etc.) likely ensures a less biased perception of their tunes. After

the two-year break, *A Million Hurtful Things* builds well on the foundation laid on their previous release. The band's lineup has changed, with Justin Riley (Terribly Empty Pockets, Super Desserts, etc.) replacing the departed Dave Gibson on Wurlitzer, other keyboards, and background vocals. Though the keyboards have always been an integral part of the Nouns sound, Riley seems to be more assertive in his contributions, especially on the Animals-esque *Conditions Are Worse* and the jaunty *The Lesser Stars*. Lead singer/guitarist and primary songwriter Matt Ogborn has concocted another batch of roughly delicate pop songs. His wit and enunciation are as sharp as ever, lending humor to *Long-Time Correspondent* and the sneering *My First Death Ray*. The rhythm section of Travis Kokas (bass, background vocals) and Phil Francis (drums) continues to provide a steady backbone for the band, and Francis rumbling fills add excitement. Though the sound presented here is very similar to that of their previous effort, the main difference (and in my opinion, improvement) is that the songs on *A Million Hurtful Things* are much more drawn out and relaxed, with a perceptible swagger that was often lacking in their previous material. These longer tunes seem to allow the band to get more comfortable with the task at hand, to pleasing effect. The addition of handclaps is nice too.

-Donewaiting

The new *Proper Nouns* album is different from the band's last release in many ways, but all of them come down to one factor. "We spent a lot more time on it," keyboardist Justin Riley said. From songwriting to mixing to sequencing, the Columbus pop-rock band extended its process this time out. The extra work shows on *A Million Hurtful Things*, the band's second album and first for local label All Hail. Last time, the band worked at a whirlwind pace. *Birds and Butterflies* was recorded and mixed in a few weeks and released on Columbus Discount Records in 2006. Despite some changes of pace, mostly *Birds* was full of quick, punchy songs and produced like a punk-rock record. "We just bashed it out," singer-guitarist Matt Ogborn said. Since then, Ogborn's unmistakably literate songwriting has continued to grow, as have contributions from each member. Riley chipped in three songs for *A Million Hurtful Things*, though Ogborn wrote new lyrics for them because Riley's "weren't depressing enough." Bassist Travis Kokas said each player, particularly drummer Phil Francis, upped his game on the new record. The increased musical prowess led to careful arrangements, more instrumental interludes and, consequently, longer songs. Album closer "1976," a slew of ideas shoehorned into one track, clocks in at the previously unthinkable length of 6:44. The looser feel and warmer production on *A Million Hurtful Things* lends itself to the *Proper Nouns*' expanding sonic universe. "I don't think we're necessarily that much of a punk-rock band," Ogborn confessed. Still, their

music remains firmly rooted in British post-punk and new wave. It's as melodic and energetic as XTC, as morose and wordy as The Smiths. Songs with titles like "The Hateful Throng" and "Doom Gloom" are buoyed by glorious background harmonies and effortlessly hooky instrumentation. Those nuances are clearer thanks to meticulous mixing by Riley, who joined the Proper Nouns after Birds and Butterflies. The band had to be time-conscious when paying by the hour for mixing. With Riley twiddling knobs for free, they could afford to be perfectionists. They thought they had their final product a few months ago, but when they performed at Mark Wyatt's birthday party, the Columbus Power Squadron frontman was floored by a new song called "Long-Term Correspondent." They decided to go back and record that song plus three more, ditching three older tracks in the process. It's a good thing they made the change. "Long-Term Correspondent" may be the best thing the Proper Nouns have done, a power-pop symphony built on ascending keyboards, descending bass and relentless, hard-charging guitar and drums. The band is particularly fond of those newer tracks. They're constantly working on something new, so songs that have been around for more than a year feel like ancient history. -Columbus Alive People who are interested in The Smiths Superchunk The Fall should consider this download.

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