

MGMT's LP is 'Spectacular'

BY JORDAN LAWRENCE
STAFF WRITER

Oracular Spectacular, the full-length debut from Brooklyn electro-pop duo MGMT, is a marvelously fun mix of sounds taken from all over the musical map.

Like a well-tuned blender, the group takes electronic and new wave sounds and mixes them with classic pop-rock influences (in the vein of David Bowie, The Beatles and The Beach Boys) to make one exhilarating sonic milkshake.

While The Killers fell flat on their faces when they tried to infuse their music with the spirit of Bruce Springsteen, MGMT's flirtations with classic rock only serve to make the music more accessible.

For instance, the transition from propulsive electronic-rock-band-anthem on opener "Time to Pretend" — the album's standout track — into the Ziggy Stardust-inspired political commentary in "Weekend Wars" serves as a galvanizing introduction to what the



MUSIC REVIEW

MGMT
ORACULAR SPECTACULAR

ELECTRONIC/POP



album holds in store.

MGMT delivers for the duration of the album, filling *Spectacular* with incessantly catchy and danceable pop gems.

And though experimentation continues throughout, there are few instances where MGMT's

deviations from pop music standards don't lead to success.

The all-out balladry of "Pieces of What" is a charming elegy on the prospect of growing up, and the Beach Boys-psychedelia introduction to the electronic pagan freak-out of "Future Reflections" closes the album on a palpably emotional high.

The album's only failure comes with "4th Dimensional Transition" which marches and drones along, completely losing the band's usually infectious energy.

But when MGMT delivers that energy, the album becomes a riveting musical explosion, alive with ambitious excitement and engaging melodies.

At this point in 2008, *Oracular Spectacular* is likely to be the most entertaining new record listeners will be able to find on store shelves.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

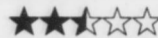
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PSYCH-POP



Evangelicals, another keys-'n'-guitars indie-rock band with a knack for spacey songs about something suitably spacey and an infatuation with filling every available space with some sort of sonic embellishment, does pretty much what every other band fitting that description has done with *The Evening Descends*, the second album from the Oklahoma band.

There are the could-have-been-anthem-if-they-meant-something choruses, and the almost-but-not-quite-explosive dynamics, all meshed in with busy arrangements that make simple song structures feel more complex just by burying them in superfluous stuff.

It's fun to listen to at first because the band can craft a memorable melody, but after a while it just gets bogged down with so much extra sound that the songs themselves are stifled and unaffectionate.

It's a delightfully ignorable accompaniment to daydreaming, but it's unlikely to encourage much else out of its listeners.

-Bryan Reed

which features two full albums.

The first disc, *Lion Land*, falls on its face as it attempts to use the reference as a crutch. Walker tries to replicate Panda Bear's 2007 success, mistakenly drowning piercing and annoying faux-Beach Boy harmonies in experimental studio noise and expecting it to be the same.

The second and vastly more successful disc, *Laughter's an Asshole*, takes The Beach Boys' affinity for sunshine balladry and quirky sounds with country-tinged pop to create a pleasingly off-kilter — if long-winded — mix.

The bittersweet ballad "19 Birthdays," for instance, is a charming rumination that hits at the heart of what it is to grow up.

But at 17 tracks, the cute California feel and humorously faked country accents can grow a bit tiresome.

In total, Walker's two new albums stretch their sonic vehicles too far to make for a unified and wholly enjoyable listen.

-Jordan Lawrence

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