

Here is it: "Milk Famous": the brand new and highly anticipated third album by White Rabbits. Only this Brooklyn-based band's combination of Midwestern roots and eclectic musical backgrounds could produce the balance of beauty and bombast that is "Milk Famous." Produced by Mike McCarthy, "Milk Famous" will be on every person of wealth and taste's shortlist of Best Records of 2012.

And what else is there to know about White Rabbits, you may ask? Well, plenty...

To begin, not one member of the band has ever perpetrated a ponzi scheme. This fact may sound alarming given how newscasts are, literally, riddled with stories on ponzi schemes these days. But I assure you that if you were to scour most of the internet or visit your local library's microfiche machines you will not find one ponzi scheme associated with Stephen Patterson (vocals/piano/guitar), Alex Even (guitar), Gregory Roberts (guitar/vocals), Jamie Levinson (drums) or Matthew Clark (drums). (NOTE: That's not to say they wouldn't take your life savings given the chance, but they'll most likely do it by getting you to buy "Milk Famous" and tickets to all their shows and getting your friends to do the same... which is really not all that dissimilar to a ponzi scheme).

Anyway, White Rabbits' roots go back to Columbia, MO where Stephen, much like fellow Midwesterner Iggy Pop, was making a living playing the drums in bands alongside much older jazz musicians (in Stephen's case, authentic grown-up jazz cats—after a youthful run of hardcore punk bands, he was actively shunning popular music for a while), which helped him assimilate to other instruments and orchestration. "It was always a struggle for me early on to learn how to play instruments that had notes. Once I started viewing the keyboards as 88 drums, it really opened up the way I can play." (It should be noted here that White Rabbits have two drummers, Jamie and Matt, far as I can tell from seeing them live).

It was also during Stephen's college years majoring in music composition and jazz drumming that he struck up a friendship with Greg while the two were pulling a "High Fidelity" at Streetside Records in Columbia, MO (I don't know which guy was John Cusack and which was Jack Black--you'll have to ask them). Greg, Matt and fellow future Rabbit and then-17-year-old high school student Alex needed a drummer for their ingeniously named punk band Texas Chainsaw Mass Choir (how did no one else ever think of that name?) so they asked Stephen to join and just like Michael Corleone in Godfather III, he was pulled back in.

The first White Rabbits incarnation, however, didn't lumber together until Greg bumped their original singer out of the lead vocal spot. They wrote, recorded, even toured with The Walkmen and Blood Brothers (with whom Texas Chainsaw Mass Choir had previously toured) in this early version--all the while saving every penny from the band's gigs and Stephen moonlighting as a waiter and house drummer in a Columbia MO jazz joint (where Matt also waited tables, while across town Greg was working a similar job at the Blue Note) in hopes of moving to New York. (Another note: These hopes and dreams probably didn't involve living together in the same one-room Brooklyn apartment, though it should be said that for Alex--having grown up one of nine siblings--nine!--it was probably a relief!)

The band's Big Apple prayers were answered, uh sort of, in the form of a fairly awful car accident that resulted in a settlement paid to Stephen that funded the journey to NYC--which is a strangely good analogy for the White Rabbits' signature trick of wrapping some seriously dark and twisted shit in really pretty packages. The band eventually relocated to New York, soon rearranging the lineup to split vocals and songwriting duties between Stephen and Greg, and working on the material that would become their first album--oh and and getting signed to a record deal after performing their first New York City show. You know, the same way it happens for NO ONE ELSE EVER...

...Except that it happened again between their first and second albums, when tbd Records head honcho Phil Costello (no relation to Elvis, though both have had momentous impact on White Rabbits in their own ways) accidentally caught a White Rabbits set while scouting another band at SXSW and offered them a deal on the spot. Crazier still, Costello turned out to have co-founded the Blue Note with Greg's old boss Richard King, who along with Costello was BFFs with Stephen and Greg's former boss, Streetside Records owner Kevin Walsh. None of the above was known to the Rabbits when Costello first approached them, which could lead you to think Damon Lindelof was writing their lives for them.

So... the first White Rabbits album, "Fort Nightly" was released in May 2007 on Say Hey records. Jamie, who had originally been brought on as manager, was recruited as an actual band member as the band realized their increasingly complex and intertwining rhythms required another drummer (and as a manager, Jamie was a fantastic drummer), and such was the beginning of the sound and material that would become album #2. White Rabbits' critically acclaimed sophomore album "It's Frightening" was released in May 2009, featuring what the band felt was a more stripped

down, abrasive approach--you know, the tried and true formula for career suicide... which resulted in the song, "Percussion Gun," which racked up a million hits on Youtube and wound up featured everywhere from "Friday Night Lights" to FIFA World Cup. Do you have any idea how many people watch soccer? Seriously, do you have the slightest idea?

Which brings us to the band's new album, "Milk Famous," set to be released on March 6th. The title of the record, "Milk Famous," Stephen explains as meaning, "To be known but *not* for something you intended to be known for." Which you may have figured out on your own. Or you might have wondered for a while what it meant if he hadn't said that. Or just wondered what becomes of the truly "Milk Famous" late in their careers. Like Bobby Brown. Is he alive? I mean, how stupid are you going to feel if you're trying to think of other people who are "Milk Famous" when Bobby Brown could be lying face down in a ditch?

"Milk Famous" is both the third White Rabbits album, and the band's second release for tbd records, the label most famous for being Radiohead's current home. But technically White Rabbits signed to tbd before Radiohead. And Radiohead just added that second drummer, didn't they? So I'm not accusing anyone of following in someone else's footsteps or anything... I'm just saying.

You've probably already heard "Heavy Metal," the first track from "Milk Famous" to go public, which will prepare you for the upcoming single, "Temporary." Singles are a funny thing, y'know? That is, in terms of someone choosing which song you should listen to first. But with an album as hauntingly textured yet awe-inspiringly pop, we could all benefit from some assistance on a solid starting point.

And your starting point may be loving "Heavy Metal" or it may be loving "Temporary." But you'll equally love other songs such as "Back For More" (which Stephen and Alex produced themselves), "I'm Not Me," "The Day You Won the War," "I Had It Coming"... Hell, there isn't a clunker in the bunch. And if you disagree, you are listening to music incorrectly. Go back and start from scratch.

Finally, and somewhat unrelated, I'm told Bobby Brown is definitely not in a ditch. Maybe Elvis Costello could write a sweet tune about Bobby Brown dying in a ditch. I bet it would be vaguely creepy but ridiculously catchy. Kinda' like the new White Rabbits record. Make sure to ask the band what they think about that when you see them live on tour this year.