

ABSENT SOUND, PRESENT BOOMING

Winnipeg experimental band beckons this spring



Absent Sound stands behind a big coloured thing.

PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF ABSENT SOUND

TIMOTHY BROWN STAFF

Absent Sound has been a familiar band to the Winnipeg music scene for a few years now and have been slowly but surely attracting more and more attention. Combining hypnotic sounds and unique live performances, they are not a group that is easily forgotten. Member Rob Menard describes the group as follows: "Engaging, atmospheric, dream-like ambiance are the powerful elements

in the music of Absent Sound. These puppet masters wield a musical arsenal, creating huge dramatic worlds of sound with organic chants, colossal guitars, hypnotic off-time record scratches, beats, loops, and Lesley speaker keyboard drones: ears open and eyes closed is all the flight attendant requests."

This of course only describes what you would be listening to if you saw Absent Sound play. What you would

be watching, while maintaining that engaging, atmospheric, dream-like ambiance, is something incredibly exciting. Incorporating a variety of creative elements into their live performance, the band creates a unique and beautiful world that pulls the audience in. As Menard says, "Absent Sound's live show puts them in the realm of an art installation: employing at times performance art, multiple television sets, performance painting,

film projection, contemporary dancers, and stilt-walking pantomime. Winnipeg's creatively fertile filmmaking community has also perfectly complemented their music."

Absent Sound are quite active when it comes to performing, and this spring is looking to be no different. They will be performing at this year's Nuna Icelandic Festival taking place right here in Winnipeg. The Nuna Festival is a convergence of art between

Iceland and Manitoba. There are a variety of artists involved who all share, in some way, an Icelandic connection, and an interest in exploring the creativity shared by the two countries. In the case of Absent Sound, they were invited to attend because of Menard's Icelandic heritage.

Absent Sound's upcoming April 26 performance at the beautiful Ellice Theatre, like any of their shows, will be sure to entertain and mesmerize all in attendance. Early Absent Sound performances included just two people, Dave Fort and Rob Menard, but since then they have started to expand by incorporating new instruments, people and ideas. Menard describes the group's lineup for the performance thusly: "Playing with Absent Sound are Rob Menard, guitars, vocals, samples and loops, David Fort, guitar, bass, vocals, Josh Butcher, organs, vocals, Kelly Castle, drums, percussion, Boudicca, shamanic performance art, Natalia Zielinski, violin, and Doreen Girard, cello." Opening for the band that evening are The Folps and Philia.

After the festival, the group heads westward for a short two-week trip, shortly after which they'll head to the Superstarcastic Festival in Chicago, taking place June 1. Then, on June 21, they will be playing at ElementSircus, a solstice celebration that they put on in Winnipeg twice every year. This year they will be performing with legendary vocalist Damo Suzuki from the equally legendary German band Can. They will also be accompanying Suzuki for a few dates on his North American tour. "Our Waterloo show with Damo Suzuki will be recorded by the infamous Darryl Neudorf [who has been a producer for Neko Case, the Sadies, and the New Pornographers] and possibly be put out by Damo himself," says Menard.

Absent Sound's live performance, whether it's with Damo Suzuki or not, is a show not to be missed. With the addition of the new members, sounds, and performances, Absent Sound look more ready to blow your minds and ears than ever before. So, bring \$7, go support those people with Icelandic heritage (like myself) and check out one of Winnipeg's best and most creative bands.

GOSA SHOW WOWS

Greatest thing world has ever seen, says reporter

TIMOTHY BROWN STAFF

Right now at the Gallery of Student Art in the University Centre, you, the student body, have the privilege of seeing student printmaking at its finest. The show is titled, "Rub, Scratch, Cut, Pull. New prints from the School of Art," and really exemplifies the talent that this faculty contains.

The students exhibit a wide variety of styles, showcasing different forms of printmaking. With such a high level of quality, each piece looks exquisite, as if done by professional artists. Some pieces look like incredibly detailed

sketches while others take on a very clean, animated look. There are prints of birds, other animals, portraits of people, and even one that looks like Jesus.

One of my favourite pieces also happens to be the most noticeable piece (at least when you first walk in). It is a print of a penis inserted into a vagina. As soon as you look at it, the subject matter is quite noticeable, however, the style of the piece is very design-oriented, which allows the viewer to move beyond the subject matter and notice the brilliant, symmetrical composition. The use of colour in the piece is also fantastic. There is a mix between brown, pink, various yellows, orange, and white. Each colour remains separate, never blending, creating a very animated, beautiful work of art.

This show acts as a perfect precursor to this weekend's Annual school of art open house. From noon

until 5 p.m., you'll get the chance to see exactly what the school of art has been up to this year. Student artwork will be showcased in the FitzGerald Building, the Art Barn, and the Ceramics/Sculpture building. And this isn't just a few pieces being placed up on the walls at each building. Every single wall and table will be covered in the finest student work that the school of art has to offer. You will be able to see work from first-year students who are just beginning to grasp the fundamentals as well as being able to see thesis students demonstrating the amazing talents that they have developed over the course of their degree.

I urge you to check out the open house, not as some desperate plea to gain support for student art, but to allow you to see just how amazing some of these young artists really are. It's not just the thesis students pumping out fantastic art. You have first-year students pushing the limits of creativity, second- and third-year students who have such a handle on drawing and painting, it leaves you

breathless. There is so much to see and it's only one day of the year. This is a show you most definitely don't want to miss, for if you do, your life may never be complete. But, if you really

don't have the time to check out the open house, then at least stop in at the Gallery of Student Art and show your appreciation for some damn fine student prints.

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