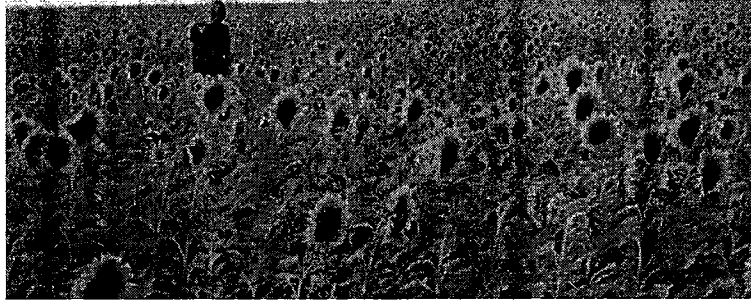


The Uglysuit

by Alex De Petro

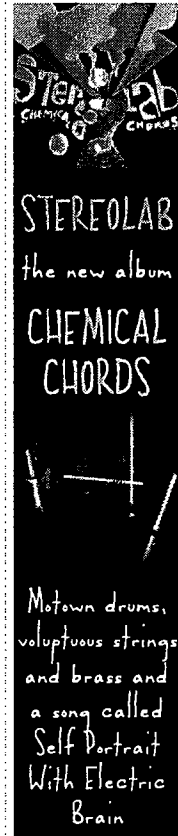
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Belying the initial aversion caused by their strange name, Oklahoma indie outfit The Uglysuit craft a unique blend of music, a strange Japanese chocolate bar: equal parts sweet, creamy pop, crunchy folk and the chewy nougat of psychedelic rock. Guitarist Kyle Mayfield spoke with Alex De Petro.

An expansive collection of six friends, The Uglysuit are an idiosyncratic pop-rock group, as their name might suggest. "There are a few different stories to this name. Everyone with a story thinks they are right or are not sure enough to say its right. But, my story is that Cros (Crosby Bray, the band's drummer), Israel and I one day were just hanging, talking. We started just goofing off with noise and gibberish when I believe Israel said something that sounded like 'Uglysuit' and we all laughed, then thought, "Hey that could be our name". Now, Israel [Hindman, the band's guitarist] thinks that the name came from our dressing of old men, and how we are referred to as old men all the time. Which, I like a little better than my story, but I just don't know exactly if it's right or not."

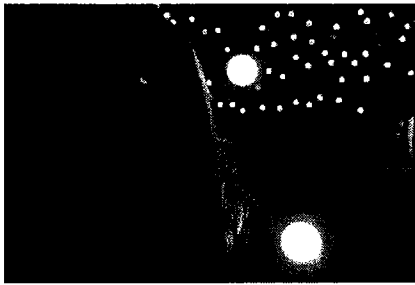
As much as the Uglysuit cannot settle on a common story on their name, the band also reflect a diverse concoction of influences, including Frank Sinatra, influential alternative rockers Built to Spill, Sigur Ros and Canadian Indie super group Broken Social Scene. However from this consternation, from which bands influence their music to the genesis of their moniker, a streamlined musical confluence has emerged, and the slick, professional sound of their debut, self titled album is an excellent testament to this. "Our songwriting consists of either someone bringing in an idea or song and we add our own parts to it; or us all jamming for hours and just getting lost in the atmosphere of the musical realm. Israel handles most of the written journeys for our tunes, but on our new album there was at least a little help from just about every person, and I would say that it has to do with just wanting to share happiness in all sorts of ways." The recording process for the album wasn't all smiles, as the band experienced some financial difficulties in just getting to Chicago to record the album, but Mayfield describes it as immensely satisfying. "It was definitely a life changing experience for all of us. Working with our other member of the band, our engineer and producer Manny Sanchez, was some the most fun I have ever had. We all learned so much from him and added at least 17546778 years onto our lives. It was quite insane to have almost no boundaries when it came to playing different instruments, and we had as much creative room as we wanted since Manny was either right there with us or a couple of steps ahead. Not to mention the traveling to Chicago was just the dressing to our delicious



salad. It was a long, intense, extremely fun process that I didn't want to end."

Born out of mere happenstance, The Uglysuit is Mayfield's second musical group after being in Corban Eldra with most of his current band. As many bands start with just three chords (and indeed many never progress any further), The Uglysuit started with just three songs. "We played one show. We only had Chicago so we thought it might be a good idea to have at least three songs for a set. Seeing this as a good idea Israel and I wrote a little folk jingle with Jimmy tapping the cymbals in the background. Now that we had two, we just needed one more. The night before the show we sat at the venue after setting up the sound and practiced what we had and tried to write another tune. We were coming up short and were just out of ideas so we decided to break for a little while. Our friend Kannon Moore was hanging around with us so we chatted with him for a bit until Crosby picked up the bass and started to play this awesome high string walk down. Instantly we thought, "That's it!" and stationed ourselves to indulge. Since Cros was on bass, Jimmy sat at the keyboard we had and Israel and I strummed our acoustics. Luckily Kannon was a drummer, so he stepped in and followed our lead and presto soundo we had our third song: which was all improvisation at the show (words and all) since it was so last minute. But it was oh so much fun."

Mayfield, signed to local label Quarterstick/Touch and Go, reminisces on that



experience with his typical eccentricity. "It was as if we were 5 year olds waking up on Christmas morning in our butt-flap pajamas shoveling cookies in our mouths opening up that giant present that you try pretend not to know what it is, but you are too excited and rip right into that Muppet blow up house." Now that they are signed, and with the album to be released in mid-August,

the band will focus other aspirations" "touring, getting our name out there, seeing how the album will do, and finding floors to sleep on while we are eating our Ramen noodles and traveling the road looking for anyone who wants to do something." But it seems that the industry side of music is of secondary importance to the band, and when asked what direction The Uglysuit will take next he is more philosophical than pragmatic. "Playing. That's all I want. All I care about. Getting up in the morning consists of me knowing I can play. I expect what is coming our way. Anything and everything. We are just along for the what life has to offer. And to share it with the world or whoever cares to listen."