

HALF LIGHT PRESS



The Lost Album
(2015)



Three Imaginary Girls



Earlier this summer, I haphazardly found myself observing Half Light during their CD release party that took place at The Comet Tavern in Seattle. At the time I didn't know anything about them, but I was certainly impressed by the atmospheric and reverb-laden sound that emanated from their amplifiers. Almost two months later, I acquired a copy of their debut album, entitled *Sleep More Take More Drugs Do Whatever We Want*, and this disc does not disappoint. In fact, it is the best release that I have heard by a Seattle band this year.

The members of Half Light are big fans of acoustic and electric based space rock such as Mojave 3, Slowdive, Mazzy Star and The Church. Impressively, they managed to convince Tim Powles, drummer of The Church, to produce this recording. His wonderful production style that weaves a hazy, shimmering cacophony suits this band perfectly as they balance the line between beautiful and chaotic. In Powles' own words, Half Light "certainly has what many bands dream of, a sound." A unique and memorable sound collage is what they offer their listeners, and the nine songs featured on *Sleep More* are all one needs to be convinced of this point.

Vocalist Dayna Loeffler comes across with a soft and bashful voice that has a slightly raspy quality, which sounds akin to Allison Shaw of Cranes at times. On the track "Barbs," these innate tones are augmented with a heavy reverb production effect. The guitars are also drenched in delay and generous amounts of echo, making the whole thing take on a truly drugged-out in space effect. This intoxicating quality is quite lovely to for the listener to indulge in.

The liquid bass line on "Charmed" scales along in a similar fashion to recent material by The Church, while pedal steel guitar provides the lead soundtrack. The pedal steel doesn't evoke any alt-country type of sound; instead, it exists as a counterpart to the other distorted electric rhythm guitar. "Burn It Down" is a mysterious chasm of crimson darkness. Once again, the guitars crackle and blaze in unison, but at a slower tempo this time and the gorgeous hum of a cello is also featured in the mix. There is an Eastern flair to the music that is reminiscent of The Cure circa *Kiss Me Kiss Me Kiss Me*. The last part of the song then segues into an acoustic guitar and multi-tracked vocal fade.

Apparently, there was an alternate title to the record that Tim Powles preferred, which was *Awake at the Wheel of the Somnambulist Mobile*. Both titles get the basic idea across that Half Light is making music for themselves under their own terms. Their influences, though fairly easy to observe, are not driving these songs beyond being a reference point. Half Light is a unique Seattle band to keep and eye and ear out for, as they explore a territory that is unlike much of the current independent music scene. – ANDREW BOE

Pop Matters



Rarely has an album title felt so much like the music it contained. Ushering comparisons to Mazzy Star, the hazy, hallucinogenic *Sleep More, Take More Drugs, Do Whatever We Want* absolutely feels like one has slipped back into experimentation-heavy teen years with little to no responsibility. Settle down into the folds of a comfy couch and let this record take hold. Lead singer Dayna Loeffler recalls Denali with her angelic, impish and airy vocals and elongated singing style.

Half Light names Jimi Hendrix records as inspiration for the disc, which layers Loeffler's vocals over one another alongside drifty pedal steel and meditative guitar. Standout track "Burn It Down" continues the dreamy vibe with feedback manipulation, a slow, innocuous bass-line and Loeffler's lacy voice offsetting dissonantly harmonizing guitar strumming. Finally, as an interesting sidenote, the drummer's name is also Dayna with a Y (Dayna Smith). – SARAH MOORE

When you hear of a band who have such an attempt at a rebellious sounding album title, it's hard not to conjure up a first impression of another bunch of scruffy looking guys from London thrown through their nearest branch of Topshop and sent on their way towards the limelight, quivering with guitars in their hands and silly trilby hats resting upon their awkwardly cut fringes.

Thankfully Seattle band Half Light has a lot more going on in between their ears than that. On their MySpace, they list their record label as "this isn't our day job" - they aren't currently signed to any label. It's a shame - they're such talented songwriters and musicians it's a shame to see that this isn't too far off being a very elaborate hobby.

Opening with the utterly enchanting 'Affected' there's a clear Mazzy Star/Dandy Warhols/Black Box Recorder influence running through the veins of it. The breathy vocals of Dayna Smith and Dayna Loeffler blend not unlike Kim and Kelly Deal of The Breeders fame. Such an incredible opening track immediately blows away any illusions of trend chasing antics.

Over the next handful of songs, the quality doesn't deteriorate. There's a country tinged feel to 'Blueprint', and 'Feel' is the album's most direct moment of dreamy pop, finishing up long before it's overstayed its welcome at a paltry two and a quarter minutes.

Sadly 'Burn it Down' doesn't quite have the same effect whilst following song, the instrumental 'Ambeing' also falls a little short of the mark. It's not a particularly bad song as such, it's just that compared to the other offerings on the album it just can't live up to the towering expectations that the band bring upon themselves with songs as enjoyable as 'Charmed' or 'Mary'.

Half Light haven't only managed to make a charming debut but also to bring many different genres together to create gorgeous landscapes together. There's the psychedelica of Thirteen Tales era Dandy Warhols, the general songwriting craft of Mazzy Star, hey, there's even elements of post-rock such as Sigur Ros and the sparseness of Portishead too. First impressions can indeed be deceptive - please let this impression be a lasting one. - MATTHEW SHAW

Seattle PI

"Half Light features the vocals of Dayna Loeffler, formerly the Voyager One bass player. She's still in space rock, but a little dreamier now.

"The band will be playing an intoxicating new song called 'Affected' and other material from its coming CD, 'Sleep More, Take More Drugs, Do Whatever We Want.'

"One of the nice things about flying under the radar: You can call your recording *whatever you want*, and probably get away with it." -- TOM SCANLON

The Louisville Eccentric Observer



These are down-tempo, electric lullabies for adults who don't necessarily want to sleep. Besides, dreaming is a much, much more likely side effect of the debut from Seattle's shoegazing six-piece. Trippy also comes to mind.

The songs specialize in spaciousness. Singer Dayna Loeffler's candy-coated vocals move over, under and through mounds of distortion, strolling rhythms, twinkling guitars and expansive, moody soundscapes that appear, disappear and reappear throughout. If this sounds like a sonic cousin to Mazzy Star, it is. But it's a distant cousin. Whereas Mazzy was dark and lethargic, Half Light has more hope, more electronics and definitely more propulsion under the hood, not to mention psychedelics, beginning in the sticky tune "Affected."

But it's not all pensive ruminations. Take "Feel," for instance: This pop-leaning confection sheds the prevailing dark winds for two minutes of carefree sunshine, underlined by a buoyant bass line and a full-bodied chorus that repeats "You want to feel." Whether that is a question or a command remains to be seen, but at eight minutes into the album, whoever is listening is certainly feeling something. — SHAWN TELFORD

The Stranger

the Stranger

In the late 1990s, Seattle was rife with music to sway to drunkenly, and no band exemplified the local shoegazer aesthetic better than Voyager One. Dayna Loeffler, V1's old bassist, has switched to guitar in Half Light, the band she now fronts. Half Light's debut CD, aptly titled *Sleep More, Take More Drugs, Do Whatever We Want*, is being released tonight, and it's exactly what you'd expect: smooth, dreamy spacerock that owes influences to Pink Floyd, Lush, My Bloody Valentine, and, of course, Voyager One. The Purrs, another example of finely crafted local postpunk, round out a strong bill for fans of psychedelic rock. -- MATT GARMAN

Aversion



There are a lot of things you need to be a good band. Vision and chemistry are among the most important on the list. Teamwork, though, is equally important: Every member needs to pull his or her own weight. It's not the most exciting thing for fans and critics to talk about, but it's fundamental. You're not going to rock the house if your drummer's half asleep or your lead guitarist is covering up for an iffy bass player.

Teamwork's the category in which Half Light best succeeds. With singer/bassist Dayna Smith's lovely vocals at the forefront of *Sleep More, Take More Drugs, Do Whatever We Want*, many a lesser band would be tempted to ride it out on her coattails. She's a strong enough singer, with a sugary voice that's sweet but neither childish nor twee, to carry a band to modest heights. Not Half Light, though. The rest of the lineup keeps up, and keeps up admirably. A pair of guitars weave around each other, sometimes uniting into the chilly isolation of dream-pop guitar figures reminiscent of Starflyer 59, sometimes marshalling their forces for a big-crunch chorus that takes hints from The Smashing Pumpkins before they went soft. Usually, though, each guitar works one of those angles against the other six-string, leaving an uneasy swirl that yanks your ears in two directions at once.

Smith's bass holds down the fort and keeps everything from going too gonzo, as solid drums add the last bit of structure to the band. The rhythm section won't shine on its own accord, but it's enough to counteract the guitars' habit of threatening to woosh off into astral atmospherics at every chance.

That's what makes Half Light work so well together: Each member knows its place in the grand design and does it well. None of its members are likely to become guitar heroes or rock gods, but, man, can they stand up and deliver when they need to. "Burn it Down" weaves a slippery glitter-pop guitar lead in and out of a crackling rhythm guitar that obliquely references Hum or The Twilight Sad, while Smith coos serenely into the whirlwind. There's so much going on, you'll need a couple listens just to realize what you'll need to go back and take in. "Blueprint" is a slow-burning ballad built off a droning keyboard and less-is-more guitars that's a reminder of the great mellow jams of '90s acts like Mazzy Star and Charlatans U.K. Guitars hold back, providing little but distorted half-time raking in "Barbs," letting vocals enjoy the spotlight, finally opening up into otherworldly dream-pop midway through the track.

Half Light's chemistry sets the stage for its songs, but its teamwork makes it happen: There's nary a point in *Sleep More* where a band member sandbags it, nor are there any of those tacky grabs for the spotlight that too frequently come with band dysfunctional dynamics. Look on budding musicians: This is how a band works. Well oiled, well disciplined and as a collective. – MATT SCHILD

Americana UK



Caught in a heat haze of druggy guitars, but in a good way.

An odd mixture of Mazzy Star/Altered Images/Julee Cruise vocals with some fairly strident, yet often psychedelic, guitar is what greets the listener on the excellent opener, 'Affected', to this the splendidly named first record from Seattle's Half Light. Dayna Loeffler's dream-state vocals diffuse the power in the slow moving guitars, creating an odd atmosphere, at times it feels uplifting, at others claustrophobic, like trying to walk underwater.

The album title makes it obvious, but there really is a hallucinogenic haze hanging over this record, wandering between shoegaze, the Cure and Acetone, the guitars sound like they can't shake off the anaesthetic. 'Burn it Down' is possibly the strongest, darkest, song, sounding like an amped up backing track to a Twin Peaks murder scene. 'Ambeing', an instrumental, is positively uplifting in comparison, though could also have come from the studio of Angelo Badalamenti.

As a possible nod to their Seattle connections, 'Charmed' has a hint of Kurt/Nirvana about it, 'Something In the Way' comes to mind, as do those Meat Puppets covers, and even some chiming guitars, instead of lightening the mood, evoke the austere early work of New Order. Less interestingly, and rather worryingly, 'Missed' has a hint of Bjork to it! Overall, though arguably a tad one dimensional, this is a fine debut from a band to watch out for.

Date review added: Sunday, August 31, 2008

Reviewer: [Patrick Wilkins](#)

Reviewers Rating: 8 out of 10

Half Light, Things to Figure Out (out now, Knick Knack Records, knickknackrecords.com):

“Mesa,” the album’s intro track, sets the stage for this psych-pop release with a steady drumbeat that trails off into the gentle vocals of Dayna Loeffler and Brian Ackley. Moments of emotion are revealed by dark yet thoughtful lyrics that sail a sea of layered guitars, drums, and cello. PADMA NOLT

The Equal Ground

THE EQUAL GROUND

Seattle has always been a mecca for alternative music, or for that matter, for any sort of music that puts creativity and honesty on the forefront, so it’s just really pleasing to hear another great band coming from the place that gave us Nirvana, Pearl Jam and Jimi Hendrix. Half Light sounds nothing like the artists mentioned, but they sure help keep the reputation of their city up to standards with their unique blend of dream-pop, where straightforward melodies are embellished with a touch of shoe gaze and post-rock textures.

Things to Figure Out features nine songs with a really psychedelic vibe. Half Light often recurs to dissonances and melodic patterns borrowed from middle eastern/Asian folk, truly creating a darker effect on their songs. The vocalist does a really good job at brightening up the sound, giving a pop edge to the music, but still keeping everything interesting and avant-garde, with melodic sensibilities that remind me of artists like Bjork or Sonic Youth. Things to Figure Out is a portrait of a cohesive band with a clear focus on their identity, constructing elaborate, yet instinctive layers of sounds and striving to create a beautiful contrast with the simple, driven rhythm section and the embracing textures built with guitars and synth.

The opener “Mesa” was one of the standouts to me. The song starts with steady kick drum and bass before the band comes together to play a riff that was a bit reminiscent of the song “Spirit of Radio” by Rush. What totally took me by surprise was the chorus which picked up the pace, adding some synths and felt like it almost changed genres but it also felt natural. “The Deep End” didn’t hit me as hard as the first song but I did enjoy the way the synths and guitars were blended. The next song, “Dream about Simple,” got things back on track. While the nine tracks on the record all form a really smooth set list, “Dream About Simple” remains my personal favorite. It is built on a really cool, almost hypnotic drum pattern, and enriched by beautiful lap steel guitar lines and a clever use of vocal harmonies. Dayna Loeffler seemed to really hit the right tone for the song as well as the melody itself was really catchy.

The arrangement on “Emerald City” fared better than some of the later tracks. The guitars were clean, drenched in reverb and created a good amount of space for the vocals to sound their best. There were also breathy backing vocals that added to the floating atmosphere. Loeffler took a break from lead vocals on “Fractions” but she does do some harmonizing. I would have loved to have heard a bit more harmonizing on the album like they did on this song because it worked quite well. The next three songs were hit and miss for me before they close with “Nothing At All,” which is a really good song and I loved the anthemic chorus. While the band still has a couple of rough spots there is a surplus of talent here with great ideas and well-crafted songs. Half Light’s latest release Things to Figure Out combines dream-pop, retro, rock and other genres that should appeal to a wide audience.

Date Review Added: 5/6/2013

Reviewer: Matt Jensen

Rating: 3.9 / 5

The Delete Bin

THE DELETE BIN

POP, ROCK, PUNK, FOLK, NEW WAVE, R&B, BLUES, ELECTRONICA, AND JAZZ

June Tunes Digest 2013 - “Emerald City” by Half Light

If gauzy, impressionistic dream pop in the vein of Mazzy Star is your idea of summer music, then look no further than Seattle’s Half Light. This is summer music like a sunny sky that’s streaked with storm clouds. The song appears on the band’s full-length Things To Figure Out. – Rob Jones

Nada Mucho



2008 Year in Review: Klepac on the Best Seattle Albums of 2008

4. Half Light – Sleep More, Take More Drugs, Do Whatever We Want (Self-released)

This band's Best Kept Secret status is under serious threat, as their impossibly heavy live shows win them a growing legion of converts. Druggy guitars, a cello, spectral female harmonies, a thunderous rhythm section, everything you could need for a classic 4AD-style blissout. Do not listen to Half Light before operating heavy machinery.

Nada Mucho



Seattle Band Half Light: Too Old for Trapezes

NadaMucho.com Interview – Half Light

Q&A with Dayna Loeffler

By Matt Ashworth

NadaMucho.com: What is Half Light and why should anyone care?

Dayna Loeffler: Half Light is a Seattle based psychedelic pop band that writes textural, dreamy sound-scaped type songs. We're too old to keep up with the "Flavor of the Month" and therefore will never be eligible for soundtrack placement on any The OC type series or any Fast and Furious franchise "films," but we've been playing together for a good chunk so we understand how to interact with one another, how to ebb and flow.

NM: What can people expect from your show tonight at Barboza?

DL: We're too old for any trapeze acts, even if we have some great ideas on paper. So, probably just a lush 45 minutes of guitar-driven, textural, vibey rock songs. Barb can't be there to play cello but our friend Amanda will sit in on violin for three songs. It's sounding real nice.

NM: You guys some shows with us back in the mid 2000s I believe. Refresh my memory on who's in the band and what other projects they are involved in.

DL: Indeed we did do a few shows with NadaMucho in the past. For that we are thankful.

Dayna Loeffler – Bass, Lead & Backup Vocals

Brian Ackley – Guitar, Lead & Backup Vocals

Scott Muhlbeier – Guitar

Jeff Baars – Percussion & Drums

Barb Hunter – Cello/Vocals

We are involved in quite a few different projects outside of Half Light. Barb plays bass in Gibraltar and also does work with Mark Pickerel, Rusty Willoughby and Whiting Tennis to name a few. Dayna plays bass in the local band Transient Songs. Scott has been playing guitar in the King County Queens for the last couple years. Jeff has been playing drums in some of the local tribute shows, the latest of which was a Waylon Jennings tribute night and Brian has been building up his home studio and working on solo material under the name of Yellowline Music.

NM: What other local bands are you excited about right now?

DL: Kinski, Gibraltar, Blue Light Curtain, Levator, Low Hums, The Purrs, Mystery Ship, Hypatia Lake, Black Night Crash, and Brent Amaker and the Rodeo to name a few.

NM: It seems like a handful of great Seattle bands get overlooked every year. Talk about trying to be successful as a musician in this city.

DL: Some bands are fortunate enough to be discovered organically in this town. It can be frustrating to see bands that are being promoted as "all the rage," when they only happen to know the "right folks" and don't have all that much going for themselves as a band, but then again, it's really not all that different than the Sunset Strip back in the early 80s. Since most folks in this project have given up the teenage dream of "MAKING IT" as a rock god superstar, we all survive our day jobs and rate "success" as coming together to write good songs and deliver them as best we can. Sadly, our private jet stocked with hookers & blow must wait for another lifetime

NM: Seattle seems overrun with earthy alt-folk bands. How annoying is that?

DL: To each their own, though some of us would say it is way too much bearded, heart-felt teen drama. Young kids should not be making so much folk rehash; they should be pissed off. They should look at the world and their future and feel the need to turn their electric guitars up really fucking loud and get some angst out.

Half Light headline T Basa & NadaMucho.com's Durge Fest 5 tonight at Barboza.

The Big Takeover



Video Premier: "Feel Better Fast"

"The idea was to capture the feel of listening to music while taking public transport," says Half Light singer/bass player Dayna Loeffler on her band's first "professional" video (director Neilson Eney and his crew "actually referred to the band as 'The Talent,' she marvels).

This lovely song, from the Seattle-based dream-pop band's second LP, Things to Figure Out, "is about escape," says Loeffler, quoting the lyric: "You could feel better fast, but it's not gonna last." All we'll add is, that beer sure looks tasty!

Recorded and mixed by renowned producer and PopLlama founder Conrad Uno, Things to Figure Out is available now on vinyl and as a digital download from Knick Knack Records.

The Big Takeover



These songs are like secrets, whispered and caught in starlight. The drums and rhythms tell stories of driving and highway nights, while the guitars fall like rain-shine across the worlds that are created in this seductive half light. This music feels like dusk and flows like dawn, and though it seems like it's all tied to your dreams, it won't let you sleep. – Marcel Feldmar

In Music We Trust



Half Light – Wait for Someday (self-released)

As soon as Dayna Loeffler opens her mouth, you'd swear that Mazzy Star has found her way out of a rehab clinic somewhere and re-emerged under the name Half Light.

For some people, this would be quite the exciting news - for others, you may want to plug your ears and scream. If Courtney Love and Mazzy Star put a new group together - and for all you musical junkies who love Mrs. Cobain and Mazzy, and know that Mazzy's band consists of the original Hole lineup, then I'm sorry if I offend you - then you have two things to consider: number one, the perfect music for your next viewing of Requiem for a Dream, and number two, one of the biggest mistakes in music history. If this record was taken off of half speed, I have a feeling it would sound pretty good.

Unfortunately, the five-minute songs feel like an hour or two. The let down is that these lyrics are really good; however, to know that, you'd have to suffer through the CD without falling asleep. – Christopher Margolin