



CD reviews: Mighty Fairly; Cat-A-Tac; Girl in a Coma; Ohn; John Boy's Courage; Scissors For Lefty; Animal Collective; XBXX; A Day To Remember

By Paul Maldonado
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Here are capsule reviews of some of the bands playing this weekend at the second annual Hyperactive Music Festival:

Mighty Fairly, "Perfectly Good Airplanes" (Self-released)

Though only a trio, this Minneapolis group sounds like there's more than just three musicians playing, at least on record; we'll see how they re-create their sound live onstage.

Theirs is (electric and acoustic) guitar-driven indie rock with piano and synth fills, and multilayered harmonies don't mask undeniable hooks. The lyrics are eloquent and literate, as on "Lackluster," about life on the road and playing in empty dives. These guys get extra points for rocking the keytar.

8 p.m. Saturday at the District Bar & Grill outdoor stage, 115 Fourth St. N.W. 243-0003.

Cat-A-Tac, "Past Lies and Former Lives" (Needlepoint Records)

This Denver four-piece plays an updated version of New Wave dance rock. It's jangly shoegaze pop, with a psychedelic feel, and faux Brit-accent vocals. Major Jesus and Mary Chain influence surfaces on the fuzzy "Burned".

However, just when you thought you had them pegged, they come up with the moving alt-country rocker "Past Lies and Former Lives" that sounds kind of like Wilco.

9 p.m. Saturday at Burt's Tiki Lounge, 313 Gold Ave. S.W. 247-2878.

Girl in a Coma, "Both Before I'm Gone" (Blackheart Records Group)

A recent signee to Joan Jett's label, this San Antonio, Texas, female trio - sisters Nina (vocals, guitar) and Phanie Diaz (drums), along with childhood friend Jenn Alva on bass - plays speedy guitar rock with a pop-punk twist.

Nina possesses a great vocal range - from Patsy Cline to Debbie Harry, often in the same song (the twangy "Clumsy Sky," which starts with a melancholy intro and rocks out with punk attitude at the end).

On the futuristic cow-punk lament "Road to Home," they sound like X.

Midnight Saturday at the District Bar & Grill outdoor stage.



[Listen to "Clumsy Sky"](#)

Ohn, "Revolutionary Revolution" (Ill Dough Productions)

This electro-jazz-funk-World beat quintet from Austin layers its sound over electronic rhythms, with samples, loops and techno beats. And it occasionally throws in cello, sax and trumpet for good measure.

"Big Lie" sounds like Sade gone electronic, and the spacey instrumental "What Does Soul Represent?" uses sampled vocals, while the Latin rhythms of "Attention" give way to a great guitar break. The group also does a great down-tempo, electro cover of the Beatles' "Dear Prudence."

8:15 tonight at Club 7, 515 Central Ave. N.W. 244-9302. And 10 p.m. Saturday at the District Bar & Grill outdoor stage.



[Listen to "Attention"](#)

John Boy's Courage, "The Fall Precaution" (Self-released)

This St. Louis five-piece plays pop in the singer/songwriter tradition: An acoustic guitar supplies the rhythm, while an electric guitar takes the lead.

Singing mostly love songs, yearning vocals often give way to two-part harmonies. This is MOR (middle-of-the-road) or AC (adult contemporary) pop in the vein of the Dave Matthews Band.

8:15 p.m. Saturday at Central Connection Cafe, 215 Central Ave. N.W. 243-1190.



[Listen to "Wither"](#)

Scissors For Lefty, "EP" (Pepper Street Music)

This four-song EP is a sneak-peek of the San Francisco quartet's forthcoming full-length "Underhanded Romance," due June 12 on Eenie Meanie Records.

Two sets of brothers make up this outfit, which plays a quirky brand of pop with Strokes-like guitar cool. Piano and synth fills round out their sound. At times, they are reminiscent of the Kinks, albeit way speeded up.

Guitar squalls and electronic squiggles dominate "Lay Down Your Weapons"; falsetto vocals and a double-time tempo propel "Mama Your Boys Will Find a Home"; and "Ghetto Ways" is synth-driven New Wave dance rock.

Midnight Saturday at El Rey Theater, 620-624 Central Ave. S.W. 242-2353 or 242-2343.



[Listen to "Lay Down Your Weapons"](#)

Other bands coming to town soon include:

Animal Collective, "People" (Fat Cat Records)

These four friends from Baltimore create multilayered soundscapes from "sonic free-form electronic horror gospel hip-hop soul pop madness" that build to a crescendo. This is definitely an acquired taste.

The group is in transition and between labels, so this four-song EP is just to sate fans for September's "Strawberry Jam" on Domino Record Co.

The chantlike title track climaxes into some psycho-gospel trance, while "Tikwid" sounds like what a David Lynch flick looks like: a fevered dream. Closer "People (Live)" is a freakout that bears almost no resemblance to the first tune.

Animal Collective headlines an all-ages show Thursday at the Launchpad, 618 Central S.W. Sir Richard Bishop opens. \$12. Doors at 7 p.m. 764-8887. www.virtuous.com



[Listen to "People"](#)

XBXX, "Wars" (Polyvinyl Record Co.)

This Oakland, Calif., quartet is a frenzy of sound: A cacophonous discord between words and music as they run through 12 songs in less than 30 minutes.

With screeching aggro guitars set to stun, the vocal delivery is more like shouts. This is not easy listening. However, they do have some really cool song titles: "Ear Ever Hear"; "Here to Ruin the Party"; and "Towers of Silence" an oxymoron if there ever was.

The intensity never lets up, with incessant time shifts and tempo changes. These guys are known for their live performance, playing hyper-compressed sets of anywhere from 8 minutes to half an hour.

XBXX share the Launchpad stage with fellow noise-merchants Melt-Banana from Japan for an all-ages show Wednesday. The Rip Torn opens at 7 p.m. \$8.



[Listen to "Center Where Sight"](#)

A Day To Remember, "For Those Who Have Heart" (Victory Records)

This quintet from Ocala, Fla., play what they call "pop mosh": poppy hardcore emo with plenty of screamo. It's either sung verses with growled choruses ("Fast Forward to 2012") or growled verses with sung choruses ("Speak of the Devil").

There's lots of anger and self-loathing in the lyrics, but mostly anger - of being burned, used, abused and tossed. Betrayal, deception and fear are central to "Colder Than My Heart, If You Can Imagine"; betrayal also dominates "Start The Shooting" and "I Heard It's The Softest Thing Ever."

Relationships get the ADTR treatment, as on "The Danger In Starting A Fire," about an estranged father; choosing sides on "The Plot To Blow Up The Panhandle" culminates with, "Now I know who my friends are"; and "Show 'em the Ropes," includes the lyric: "Who needs enemies? You've got friends!"

The band declares its arrival on the scene on "Monument," while proving once you leave, you can't go back home again ("Here's To The Past").

A Day To Remember is part of the lineup Saturday during the Launchpad's three-day celebration of its 10-year anniversary. Set Your Goals, Alesana, Lydia, Anesthesia, Caustic Lye, Minus Seven, Someday, Torture Victim, Your Name in Lights, Last Fifteen, Dear Oceana, Simfonik Plague, Bayonet, Last House on the Left, Good as Dead and Anonymous Victims are also scheduled to play the all-ages show. Noon. \$10.



[Listen to "The Plot To Blow Up The Panhandle"](#)



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