

S P I N D R I F T
THE LEGEND OF GOD'S GUN

<TEE PEE RECORDS>

When it comes to psychedelic neo-spaghetti western bands, there is only one band that matters: Spindrift. Strike that. They are the only psychedelic, neo-spaghetti western band. The Los Angeles-based septet takes more than a morsel from the plate of the undisputed champion of the Western score, Ennio Morricone, and samples from his brand of reverbed-out guitar, dusty tumbling drums and lonesome whistling. Spindrift could almost push their Morricone homage to the limit on their soundtrack for the indie film, *The Legend of God's Gun*, if their sound wasn't so anchored with the rough-and-tumble of the good ol' rock song. The soundtrack leads listeners through the story, with a narrator who'd be at home in a '70s movie preview. On the title track, the anonymous voice takes us to the lawless town of Playa Diablo, where a gun-wielding preacher seeks to exact revenge on the scorpion-venom drinking outlaw, El Sobero, the "number one bad guy." Singer/songwriter/guitarist Kirkpatrick Thomas ensures that the western aesthetic stays fresh by infusing

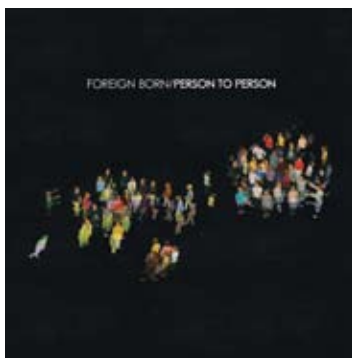


subtle elements of '60s freakbeat, psychedelic surf, and lo-fi rock into the mix. On "Indian Run" the driving thumps of a drum and Native American chanting lead into the galloping guitar lines that sear like the desert sun and soar like a red-tailed hawk. "The Scorpion's Venom" shimmies with the funky strums and big drums inherent to the swinging '60s or weirdos Brian Jonestown Massacre. Whether slinging a gun or a guitar, Spindrift's outlaw sound brings together the desert vision quest and the cosmic voyage.

F O R E I G N B O R N
P E R S O N T O P E R S O N

<SECRETLY CANADIAN>

Foreign Born's music, as their name implies, travels. On *Person to Person*, the band takes musical traditions from around the world, wraps them



up in indie-pop, and delivers them neatly packaged as extremely catchy summer songs. We're taken to the New Orleans bayous, South African townships, and the beaches of Lagos. The stomp and sway of zydeco seeps into "Winter Games," as singer Matt Popieluch's wavering, laid-back voice plays with cowbells and handclaps. The tip-toeing of the ebullient guitars of "Early Warnings" evoke the South African rhythms that made their way into Paul Simon's Sub-Saharan infused, *Graceland*. But *Person to Person* does not simply glean these cultural influences, instead Foreign Born interprets them through a filter of rock and roll. "Vacationing People," takes Brit poppy rhythms, interweaves Caribbean guitar lines, and culminates in a brass band closing out the song in a slow march. Sunny, but never sappy, *Person to Person* provides a vacation from ennui-filled, mope rock.

Y A H O W A 1 3
M A G N I F I C E N C E I N T H E M E M O R Y

<DRAG CITY>

"I know you and in slumber/I've got your number/And it's written on your forehead." Such is the offering in "Camp of the Gypsies," from the spiritual consciousness cosmonauts-cum-psych-rockers Yahowa 13. The intraneural exploration by Yahowa 13 began in the 1970s when members of the Source Family—a psychedelic commune in the Hollywood Hills—formed the musical group with their leader Father Yod at the helm. When Yod died in 1975, they disbanded, but in 2007, original members Djin Aquarian, Octavius Aquarian, and Sunflower Aquarian began touring



again. On *Magnificence in the Memory*, Yahowa 13 returns to the manic world of bizarre rock first populated by Can and Captain Beefheart. The album resuscitates the otherworldly jams and chants that makes Yahowa 13 a mind-bending pleasure whether you're tuning in or dropping out.

I S I S
W A V E R I N G R A D I A N T

<IPECAC RECORDINGS>

Metalheads employ the finest tools of musical vivisection. They carefully dissect a song, examine its parts, then catalogue it using what logicians call a material conditional.



Example: If a vocalist mimics vomiting over blastbeats, then it qualifies as grindcore. If the vocalist barfs about eating human flesh, then it's goregrind. But the system breaks down with Isis, the prog-metal band whose melodic, slowly burning musical movements swell into symphonies of combustion. On *Wavering Radiant*, the band continues to test the auspices of what constitutes metal. Their previous effort, *In the Absence of Truth*, explored the more melodic side of rock, relying on intricate guitar play and airy drum lines. *Wavering Radiant* takes the melodic guitar work that has defined Isis for the last decade and lays it over more traditionally metal beats. The double-bass kicks are back, but the album still explores the introspective spaces that makes the band more akin to Massive Attack and Godspeed You! Black Emperor. The eight-and-a-half-minute anthem "Ghost Key," begins only with softly rolling drums, crispy minimalist guitar, and bass that wouldn't stand out in a new wave song. Then the weight of vocalist Aaron Turner's gruff barks and tsunami guitar washes away the simple intro with extreme heaviness. Like most Isis songs, "Ghost Key" alternates between these moments of quiet and clamor, buttressing order upon disorder, and amplifying each when shored upon one another. Isis could be a much more accessible band if Turner abandoned the guttural screams, but if he did, Isis may cease being metal. Metal fans, after all, tend

to want to be on the fringe enjoying a genre that is, by nature, inaccessible to some people. Still, Isis continues their practice of hard-edged music that is inclusive and undeniably interesting.