

# Alt-Nation: Salt Dolls, Tequila and Zombie Girlfriends

## **The Low Anthem - *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depth Of The Sea***

After 2016's wildly experimental *Eyeland*, The Low Anthem return with a stripped-down collection of short songs on *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depths Of The Sea*. The new album began with the wreckage of the previous album as The Low Anthem were forced to cancel their tour for *Eyeland* just four dates in due to a fiery roadside crash that left band members hospitalized. Shortly after the crash, Ben Knox Miller began writing the music to what would become *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depths Of The Sea* after reading a John Cage biography by Kay Larsen. Knox Miller was inspired by the salt doll fable he came across. "The salt doll fable basically tells the story of a doll that wants to know itself and what it's made of. A teacher tells it, 'Salt comes from the ocean,' so it goes to the sea. When the doll puts its toe in, it knows something, but loses its toe. Then it puts its foot in, knows even more but loses its foot...and so on, until it's completely dissolved, never to return to the shore."

Knox Miller wrote the resulting mostly acoustic album on stripped-down equipment as a result of much of The Low Anthem's equipment being destroyed in the accident. The mostly acoustic tone of *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depths Of The Sea* harkens back to the band's folkier past on tunes like the infectious "Give My Body Back" and "To Get Over Only One Side." The latter has a loop that sounds like a vinyl record scratching throughout the song, which shows up a few times throughout the course of *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depths Of The Sea*. It actually freaked me out the first time listening as I was trying to get some sleep wondering why I was hearing my record player on a digital album. In addition to the vinyl trick, there are all sorts of electronic loops that buttress jams like "Cy Twombly By Campfire" (where it gives it a wicked Massive Attack meets folk with the occasional horn effect) and "The Krill Whistle Their Fight Song." On *The Salt Doll Went To Measure The Depths Of The Sea*, The Low Anthem leave behind the sensory overload of *Eyeland* for a trip-hop folk odyssey of self discovery through song with a renewed focus.

The Low Anthem celebrates the release of *The Salt Doll Went to Measure the Depth of the Sea* with a show with Arc Iris at the Columbus Theatre on Feb 24.

## **The Ghosts of Industry - Self-Titled EP**

The debut from The Ghosts of Industry kicks off with swirly rock of "Providence" that reminisces about a girl who once lived off Hope Street and other times gone by. The trio features vocals/two-



Malyssa Bellarosa, photo by Asim Barakzai

string slide bass by Ian Lacombe (Route 44 & Consuelo's Revenge), drums by Bob Giusti (Eric & The Nothings, Sasquatch & the Sick-A-Billys, and a thousand other projects) and Derek Reynolds on guitar. "Is This The End" has a very '90s grunge-like stomp. I dug the mid-song swing of "Ordinary Man." Check out The Ghosts of Industry online at [theghostsofindustry.bandcamp.com/releases](http://theghostsofindustry.bandcamp.com/releases)

### **The Lincoln Tunnel - Phone This One In**

On their sophomore record, *Phone This One In*, The Lincoln Tunnel return with a digital box of left-of-the-dial toe tappers. Singer/Guitarist Christian Caldarone and the boys serve up a triple shot of the shake appeal stomp of "Bangkok," the '90s indie supersonic grind "Bedroom Eyes," and the brooding "Kennedy Plaza" alone shows how the band can now expand its palette without sucking. Although I can't help thinking when listening to the opening "Time's Wasting," yeah Caldarone, mine, the rest of the album grooves like the suburbs getting lit on a Friday night. They successfully nail meshing a hillbilly twang with a grunge chorus on "Interstate Interior," and even their downer Christmas tune isn't bad. I could have done without the closing "Start a Fire" where I don't know if Caldarone is lyrically inspired by '90s techno kings The Prodigy or trying to write another verse to the Billy Joel classic, but the rest of *Phone This One In* is pretty sweet. Check out The Lincoln Tunnel online at [thelincolntunnel.bandcamp.com](http://thelincolntunnel.bandcamp.com).

### **Sugar Cones - Self-Titled**

Sugar Cones kick off their debut with a spy noir surf guitar lead on "Pretend" where singer/guitarist Malyssa Bellarosa promises, despite the title, not to pretend. One thing I like about the Sugar Cones is the different dimensions to their tunes, like where the cello on "Good Time" colors the roots yet rocking backbeat. "Rainbows" starts with a jazzy waltz before ascending into frenzied punk rock stomp that reminds me of a cross between Mary's Danish meets early PJ Harvey. Many of the songs make reference to alcohol, which is cool because I like alcohol. That said, I don't get the rally call of "tequila, whiskey and gin" on "To The Bar" because those are kind of either or drinks. Nobody in their right mind goes out intending to spend the night drinking all three. Sugar Cones save their two best tunes for last with Bellarosa's driving declaration of liberation on "Don't Tell Me" and "Plastic Things," which channels the psych-garage of Question Mark and The Mysterians. Check out the Sugar Cones online at

malysabellarosa.com/sugarconesband where the new biscuit is available for order and live at the PUG Rhode Island Pop-up Gallery at the Lithuanian Club at 475 Smith St, Providence on February 24.

### **Tony Jones & The Jerktones - Ubiquitous PostMortem**

The newest project from Tony Jones (Tony Jones & The Cretin 3) melds '50s rockabilly and '70s punk rock together with Creature Double Feature horror lyrics. "Baby Are You Dead" takes the opening chords from Them's "Gloria" and dresses it up with the swagger of The Cramps. The guitar riff of "Brain Eating Zombie Girlfriend" sounds like what would happen if one took the riff of Bob Dylan's guitar of "Don't Think Twice" and paired it with Ricky Nelson singing a love song about his zombie girlfriend. Where Nelson has been dead for decades, it's certainly feasible and I did get a laugh over the lyric talking about how she was on a diet. "Going Back to Creepsville" takes the melody of the Stones "It's All Over Now" and darkens it up.

### **In The Flesh**

**Outlaw Roadshow**, featuring sets by **DharmaSoul**, **Marshall Pass**, **Dan Masterson**, **Patrick Coman** and **Eric Fontana**, makes its monthly return to **Alchemy** on **February 15**. **Murphy's Law**, **Reason to Fight**, **The Pourmen** and **The Paraplegics** rocks **Alchemy** on **February 18**. **Portugal**, **The Man** and **Twin Peaks** rock **The Strand** on **February 22**. **Declan McKenna** with **Chappell Roan** are at **The Met Café** on **February 22**. **Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue** and **Funky Dawgz Brass Band** bring the party to **The Strand** on February 24. **Kishi Bashi** and **Julian Saporiti** are doing an acoustic show at the **Columbus Theatre** on **February 27**. **Lucero** and **Jake L Botz** will rock **The Met Café** on **March 1**.

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