

Alt-Nation: LittleBoyBigHeadonBike, Public Policy, and More

The Curious Case of LittleBoyBigHeadonBike

Lo-fi folk outfit LittleBoyBigHeadonBike is the music of **William Orchard**, and armed with a guitar and a recorder, he presents a body of work that is an impressive experiment in unbridled creativity. Orchard churns out releases like the White House goes through staffers, and since December of 2014 has put out a head-spinning 99 releases. For music nerds who try to to engage with every song, it's a frustrating amount of music. I didn't think that *Motif* would foot the bill for a team of researchers to examine every release and get an exhaustive look (*ed — we blew our April budget on discounted Peeps*), so I tried to parse through as much as possible.

Releases range from one or two tracks to full LP length work, with names that range from *Untitled* to *Flaming Pillars of Psycholiberation*. It's mostly a one-man show with Orchard playing acoustic, singing and dubbing in the occasional second guitar or harmony. His voice has a homespun quality to it, sort of like Iron and Wine or M Ward.



William Orchard

His lyrics often contain childlike themes of an ambiguous nature, but some are specific, like the somber and celebratory "Lucy Girl, My Old Dog," about the death of the family pet. His release frequency also gives Orchard a chance to be more directly topical, like his examination of the Parkland shooting, "Why can't the Earth Grow" ("It's not the first time someone died for somebody's right to hold a rifle."). Not everything draws in you, but there aren't any filler tracks either. With this much content, there aren't many blanket adjectives you can apply to the music, which I think is sort of the point.

Orchard started when he was 16, and was at first very inspired by the artist Frankie Cosmos, who at the time was posting blueprints of songs that were very unfiltered. "I was tired of the mentality that you've got to spend hours and hours to perfect a part, and I basically just didn't want to think too much about what I was doing," Orchard said.

It's not some sort of alchemy or amphetamine use that accounts for this ferocious output, just old-fashioned, anti-climactic shoe leather. "When I started, I had the goal of making myself write a song every two or three days," said Orchard. But after years of that, my mind is just used to putting it together, and it's become something I have to do. A big part of it is learning to recognize the state of mind in which you write best."

A good place to start if you're looking to dive in is Orchard's most produced work, *God Damn Wonderland*, which he says can be considered his first album. It's his first collaboration with other people, which he finds difficult, but is becoming more open to. He said, "When you trust someone else to produce your album, you're giving something away in return for something, and you hope the exchange will be worth it in the end."

Orchard's next release, LP *BIG BLUE BUTTERFLIES*, is a celebratory one: his 100th release. It will be a more polished effort in the same vein as *Wonderland*. "I started this when I was a kid in my bedroom, and in a way that's still kind of how I am, and would like to remain," said Orchard.

If you've got time and an open mind, dig in to *LittleBoyBigHeadonBike*. Orchard is a unique talent, and a testament to how there's no real reason anyone can't put their stuff out there, if they are so inclined and determined.

LittleBoyBigHeadonBike will be performing at AS220 on April 27 with *Older Brother and Gentle Temper*. All 99 releases can be listened to here: littleboybigheadonbike.bandcamp.com

Public Policy — Human Resource EP

Human Resource is the latest EP from Providence quartet Public Policy. I'm not sure if post-rock, post-hardcore or another one of the many "post-prefix" genres would be the most appropriate tag here, but there's a lot to like in *Human Resource*. To me, the best moments are in the buildup; the jarring, interlocked guitars move over a slow and steady rhythm section, and the song chugs along to some unidentified point on the horizon.

This EP brings the goods, including pensive verses that expand into forceful choruses ("Trawlers") and descriptive, half-spoken vocal stylings, à la The Hold Steady ("Alluvial Cuts"). In "Ice Age," the lyrical themes are as bleak as the soundscape (in a good way): "When the ice age comes around/All I want to do is burn down together." I'm looking forward to hearing more from this promising band.

Public Policy's Human Resource can be streamed and purchased here: publicpolicy.bandcamp.com/album/human-resource

Franz Ferdinand @ HOB Boston

Franz Ferdinand, the Scottish rock group known for a few hits in the 2000s, has probably fallen out of the hearts and minds of the general population, but they are still making solid music and, in my experience, put on a fantastic show. I remember seeing them at Lupo's in high school, where they were totally electric, due in large part to the dynamic exuberance of frontman Alex Kapranos. Their latest, *Always Ascending*, released in March, leans a little heavy on the disco/synths for my taste, but still includes some of the nifty refrains for which they're known.

Franz Ferdinand is at the *House of Blues* in Boston on Apr 10.

Built to Spill @ Fete

Built to Spill, with their off-kilter hooks and melodic shredding, is music I would describe as indie rock with balls, and I'd put them ahead of peers like Modest Mouse and Pavement. I'm often the sellout who prefers the albums made after the band has signed to majors and become more accessible, and BTS is

no exception. All their albums have something to offer, but I think their peak releases are the mid-career *Keep it Like a Secret* and *Ancient Melodies of the Future*. This show is a double bill along with **The Afghan Whigs**, rockers from a similar era, so this one is sure to be a Monday night treat.

Built to Spill and The Afghan Wigs rock Fete Ballroom on Apr 16 at 7pm.

A few other notable shows:

Screaming Females: Apr 8 @ AS220

Larry Campbell & Teresa Williams: Apr 19 @ The Met

Part 3 of Rob Duguay's infamous Birthday Benefit Bash, featuring **Consuelo's Revenge, Tall Teenagers, The Low Cards** and **Jets Can't Land:** Apr 21 @ The Parlour