

Album of the Week: Preoccupations - *New Material*



New Material by Preoccupations

Calgary post-punks Preoccupations have come a long way since changing their name from the controversial "Viet Cong" in 2015. Their 2016 album under their current name garnered a ton of positivity from critics and fans, and, in turn, brought them to the forefront of today's post-punk and new wave scene. On Mar 23, they'll be releasing their third album, titled *New Material*, via the indie label Jagjaguwar. The band shows artistic expansion in their new album while staying true to their distinct style. There's a fine balance of synth and bass guitar providing the structure for a hypnotic sound.

There's a pulse throughout the entirety of *New Material* that runs like an engine in a hot rod. Matt Flegel's vocals walk the fine line between low and high pitches, almost as if the qualities of both Ian Curtis and Morrissey's singing were combined into one. The synth presence is more accentuated versus the band's previous album due to Scott Munro's techniques. Mike Wallace's drumming is the spark that sets everything off. Munro and Daniel Christiansen unleash their guitars in stellar ways to complete the sonic arsenal.

It's always a breath of fresh air when you can notice a band's influences through their music but the band isn't a complete rip-off. Originality is just as important as embracing the past. Preoccupations pull that off by having an approach that harks back to the golden age of post-punk, and, at the same time, keeping things fresh. It's a brilliant take on tones and rhythms that flows blissfully to the ears. Dive deeper and read up on my top tracks off of the Album of the Week:

An excellent representation of the balance between the synth and bass guitar is "Solace," where Flegel's bass guitar has a deep resonance that melds nicely with Munro's electronic sheen. "Espionage" has Wallace serving as the musical firestarter on drums; there's a forceful intensity that's apparent from beginning to end. Aural supremacy is epitomized in "Antidote" with all of the band's elements coming into play to seamlessly create a fantastic song.

Preoccupations will be coming through Brighton Music Hall in Allston, MA, in the Boston metro area on Apr 18. These Canadians are amazing live, so it's highly suggested that you attend. Don't forget to grab a copy of *New Material* while you're there; it's a wonderful album that shouldn't be overlooked.

New Material: preoccupations.bandcamp.com/album/new-material

Web site: preoccupationsband.com