

Colorway Comes to Pour Judgement



On Friday, November 18th, the Western Mass rock band Colorway will be treating the Ocean State to a free show at Pour Judgement in Newport. Colorway combines Big Star hooks with guitar wizardry to create catchy earworms that make the repeat button come in handy.

Some may know frontman Alex Johnson as the former lead guitarist for Northampton alt-country outfit Drunk Stuntmen and as the guitarist from the Young at Heart chorus, a group of 70+-year-olds who sing punk songs. In 2013, after decades as a sideman, Johnson decided to step into the spotlight, with excellent results.

Colorway's second album, *The Black Sky Sequined*, came out in 2015 to much acclaim. From the sound of it, Johnson has settled into the new digs easily, doubling up on lead guitar and vocals, often at the same time. The band also has a great rhythm section and awesome harmonies courtesy of Matt Clegg on bass and Riley Godleski on drums.

I'm a sucker for a well-crafted guitar solo, and Colorway's are way more than just tearing through the pentatonic scale. Johnston pulls from a sizable bag of tricks that help keep every song fresh.

He's no slouch in the lyrics department, either. After years of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, Johnson got sober, and reflects on his newfound lifestyle in "I Never Changed."

"I washed all my clothes in gasoline/And abandoned my unique identity/All my plaids/All my stripes/Burned a brilliant runway white."

"Telephone" is an entertaining look at the overbearing presence of technology.

"I used to look ahead/But this is the future/In the palm of my hand/No matter where you are/A plane a train a car/Just can't beat my telephone there."

In a time when it's so easy to grab a MacBook and throw in tons of reverb, delay and whatever else the kids are using these days, it's really refreshing to hear an album with well-crafted, un-fooled-around-with rock songs that stand on their own. And they totally pull it off live; other than occasional extra guitar track, what you're hearing on *Black Sky* is what you're getting in the flesh.

Colorway is based in Northampton, Massachusetts, the center of the great music scene that has recently produced acts like And the Kids and Speedy Ortiz. The Western Massachusetts scene reminds

me a lot of Providence: big enough to be interesting and diverse, but small enough that you're able to grab a beer with the guy you just saw doing a stage dive. I attended UMass Amherst right down the road, and have many fond memories of the Iron Horse and Pearl Street.

This will be a good one, so get out and see it if you can!

Colorway plays Pour Judgement on Friday, Nov 18 at 10pm. Show is free!