

ALBUM REVIEWS

★★★★ Sheep shank ★★★ Trucker's hitch ★★ Square knot ★ Macrame

HEAD LIKE A KITE

*There Is Loud
Laughter Everywhere*
(Mush)

★★★

If nothing else, Head Like a Kite will inspire beat envy in musicians who hear *There Is Loud Laughter Everywhere*. The drums—many of which are supplied by *Stranger* free-lancer Trent Moorman—on this sophomore follow-up to 2006's *Random Portraits of the Home Movie* are massive on nearly all 13 tracks here. They may not be the funkier ever laid down, but they're righteously in the pocket. Credit must also go to producer Brian Deck (Modest Mouse, Secret Machines), who knows how to mic like a champ.

The primary project of ex-Sushirobo guitarist Dave Einmo, HLAKE couple these solid, dependable rhythms with agreeable melodies, resulting in songs that are just eccentric enough to avoid cliché, but that aren't devi-



ant enough to trigger surprise. Einmo is a rocker comfortable with danceable rhythms; he probably has a stellar collection of hip-hop and electronic music on his shelves and/or hard drives.

Consequently, there's something of Beck's facile assimilation of left-field rock and big beat in HLAKE's approach. Einmo's inclusion of koto, cello, Moog, theremin, and mellotron lends HLAKE's sound an exotic eccentricity.

"We Were So Entangled" spectacularly launches the disc proper, as it links Beck's marble-mouthed vocals to TRaumschmiere's bass-tardized, motorik electro. "No Ordinary Caveman" brings some of the chubbiest drum sounds since "When the Levee Breaks," attractively contrasting with the dreamy, drifting mellotron melody and Einmo's sotto voce delivery. On "Listen Young Stunners," Einmo evokes James Murphy's congested vocal cadence over beats that go beyond chubby to morbidly obese. "Keano's Couch" delivers a Trans Am-esque surge of electro rock, complete with filtered robot vocals.

Generally, the more HLAKE emphasize beats over rockin', the better they sound. "Daydream Vacation" (sung by Smoosh's Asya) is a too-blatant Sonic Youth homage—and a likely college-radio fixture—and "Big FM Radio Hit" (Teenage Fanclub meets Oasis—really?) isn't outré enough to be convincing parody nor obnoxiously compressed enough to actually garner commercial airplay. Best to let there be loud *boom-bap* everywhere. DAVE SEGAL

Head Like a Kite play Wed Sept 10, Nectar, 9 pm, \$10, 21+. With the Juan MacLean, Copy, and DJ Colby B.

the Stranger

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