

M G M T

Congratulations

With *Congratulations*, MGMT offer a heartfelt "Hear! Hear!" and an invitation to join the group in a new musical odyssey mirroring the psyches of the band's core duo, Andrew VanWyngarden and Ben Goldwasser, inspired by their adventures on the frontiers of 21st century pop & roll consciousness.

A comedy of manners of the mind, *Congratulations* finds MGMT's droll humor simmering in songs full of melodic invention and lyric mystery while opening up a luxurious new world of sound and sensation. A collection of nine complex and soulful musical *tours de force* written and recorded throughout most of 2009, *Congratulations* creates its own space and time with hints of music from the past five decades whirling in its etherous atmosphere.

It's Working, the album's opener, deliberately focuses the album's mystic energies while asking the age-old musical question, "How will I know if it's working right?" (If you're not afraid you've taken too much, goes the old saying, then you probably haven't taken enough.)

For Andrew and Ben, *Congratulations* meant paying homage to their heroes with tracks like *Song For Dan Treacy*, written for the (now-no-longer) unsung English cult musician and leader of Television Personalities, an implicit influence on MGMT, who'd become a fan of the band.

The spectral and soulful *Someone's Missing* came from a feeling that MGMT would get on tour where the vaguest psychic apparition would leave traces "like there was another band member who wasn't there or something. It's that weird feeling like something's missing, nothing feels right." The track echoes the plaintive sound of that someone calling from across the dimensional divide.

Flash Delirium, a pop apocalypse of epic proportions and whimsical subtexts, is the sound of dimensions colliding and bleeding into each, the tao spinning into white light, the Siberian key ("66 55") hidden in a climactic countdown, doubt and fear give way to a simple koan: "undercooked/overdone/mass adulation not so funny."

And then the quiet soothing by-the-brook salvation of *I Found A Whistle*, perhaps a techno-pagan talisman or fetish to summon Euterpe, Terpsichore or Polyhymnia, a respite and solace, one of the twin souls of the album.

Siberian Breaks, the album's major set piece, travels to the outer reaches of consciousness while developing what Andrew calls, somewhat cryptically, "the whole Siberian overview." The song evokes the surrealist image of surfing in Russia, the cold lonely waves of the Steppes, both actual and psychological.

On *Brian Eno*, MGMT pay lyric and tonal homage to the modern day composer whose oblique strategies and discrete musics have informed and inspired both Ben and Andrew, as evidenced by the rollicking hallucinatory instrumental *Lady Dada's Nightmare*.

The album closes with Congratulations, an elegiac look outward and around from the eye of the pop culture hurricane.

Produced by MGMT and Sonic Boom, Congratulations features active musical contributions from the band's on-stage lineup: Matt Asti (bass, backing vocals), Will Berman (drums, backing vocals), and James Richardson (guitar, backing vocals). The making of Congratulations offered MGMT the opportunity to work with a couple of their personal idols and influences including album co-producer Sonic Boom (Pete Kember) and Royal Trux front-woman Jennifer Herrema, who contributed guest vocals. "These are all amazing musical minds," Andrew says, marveling at MGMT's good collaborative karma.

Ben and Andrew first met the mythic Sonic Boom (Spacemen 3, E.A.R., Spectrum) at a Spectrum show in London in February 2009 where they wound up onstage jamming with the band on "Suicide," a vintage Spacemen 3 track paying homage to another pair of lights in MGMT's musical pantheon.

That show was a standout highlight in a surreal year that's included fan mag status and a well-publicized French court case involving the unauthorized use of "Kids" by a high-profile politician on the end of another kind of spectrum. "I feel weird getting involved with politics as a band," Ben says. "That's one of the really nice things about playing in a band. You're in a magical position where people are listening to you but you don't have to be saying anything concrete."

Oracular Spectacular, MGMT's 2008 debut album, established the group's reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. The NME's year-end Best of 2008 poll named Oracular Spectacular the #1 Album of the Year with the album's singles holding down three of the year's Top 5 Singles spots with "Kids" as #1 Single of the Year, "Time To Pretend" at #4 and "Electric Feel" at #5. The NME went on to name "Time To Pretend" the #2 Single of the Decade.

"Before our first album was even released," confides Andrew, "we thought it would be funny to call our second album Congratulations, without having any idea of what it would be."

"I don't know what style of music our new record is," says Ben. "We just want to keep creating and not get stuck."

If Oracular Spectacular was the lock, then Congratulations is the door to the new pop world of MGMT.

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