

STREET SCENE

Mellow out with Yo La Tengo live

Listen^{up}

STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

There are two things James McNew knows well — good music and good fried chicken.

That's easy to see that with one listen and one look at the new album by New York's treasured indie rock trio, Yo La Tengo. "And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out" is the band's 12th album, and the fifth to be recorded in Nashville, Tenn.

For the bassist, Nashville is synonymous with long hours in the recording studio and the best fried chicken around — Prince's Hot Chicken Shack. "It's beyond red hot," he said with a tinge of excitement in his voice. "We eat there once a week when we're in Nashville. You really can only eat it once a week."

"When you're on tour that's the one thing that really makes you remember where you are. Not to speak ill of our life." He prefers to remember a city by its restaurants, record stores and the people he meets there. "By Friday, Feb. 25 it'll be back to the road for McNew and Yo La Tengo."

"I'm totally looking forward to it," he said, on the telephone from his Brooklyn home. This time around the band is bringing two special guests to make it a five-piece: Mac McCaughan of Superchunk and David Kilgour of Clean. "David Kilgour is staying at my house. We were talking last night after rehearsal, in a way it's like we've never toured before. It's so completely different. We're playing weird theaters. I'm looking forward to it."

"Different" may be hard to



From Hoboken to here: Yo La Tengo is Ira Kaplan, Georgia Hubley and James McNew. Listen to their latest album "And Then Nothing Turns Itself Inside-Out" and then see them live March 3 at the Majestic Theatre.

come by when a band's been together since the mid-1980s. With the release of the ultra-subtle "And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out,"

McNew, along with founding members Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley, are taking their free-form, lo-fi sound to new levels. With songs like "The Crying of

Lot G" and "Cherry Chapstick" Yo La Tengo casts a musical spell complete with romantic visions and soul-stirring moods. "It's a wide open approach to writing music and playing it," said McNew. "I think it comes from playing together. The longer you do it, the more comfortable you are. You are more confident to try stuff."

That translates into musical courage, like asking one of their favorite musicians, Susie Hurrell, to play on the record or taking friends like the band Lambchop, out on the road, and even inviting McCaughan and Kilgour to join the band on stage. It's a whole new perspective for Yo La Tengo — one developed over years of creating music together.

"I do think this record really reflects confidence in ideas, in the idea to make kind of a consistent, sustained mood. I am really happy with it. It's been three years since Yo La Tengo's "I Can Hear the Heart Beating As One" was released. For this album, there were no deadlines, no real pressures. McNew said that sense of control and ability to approach the project without a specific destination in mind allowed the music to flow freely from them.

"The hardest song to record was 'Night Falls on Hoboken,'" he said. "It was recorded live in the studio. It took the better part of two days to get it on tape." The song happens to be the longest on the CD at a whopping 17 minutes and 41 seconds. And McNew said that was the shortest take.

"And Then Nothing Turns Itself Inside-Out" was produced by Roger Moutenot. There's no telling yet how that dreamy tone will go over at a live show. Though Yo La Tengo did perform

in London recently, the band hasn't played much of the new material in concert just yet. "I hope it'll go great," added McNew.

He couldn't be happier. "I don't think a days goes by that I don't think how lucky I am. Music is all I ever thought about. I'm so psyched."

Get psyched and see Yo La Tengo, with Lambchop, 8 p.m. Friday, March 3, Majestic Theatre, Detroit. \$12, 18 and over. (313) 833-9700 or mtdetroit@earthlink.net.

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Send us a photo of yourself and a list of your top five CDs from local bands, complete with band names. Then, include your list of the top five local bands to see live in the Metro area. The Observer & Eccentric will publish entries in our Entertainment section on Thursday, as space provides.

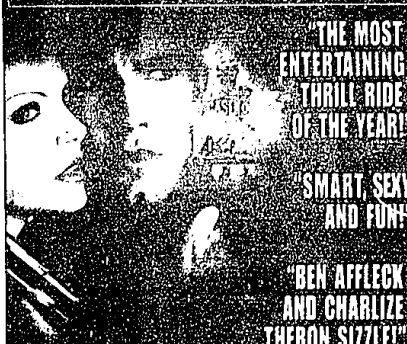
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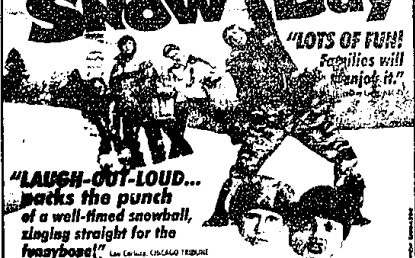
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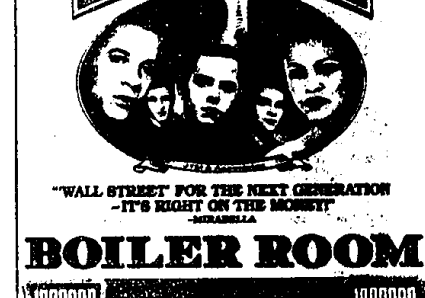
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