Get the 'Low'-down on Minnesota's meekest trio



It's just hours before she has to head out on tour and Mini Parker is ... doing laundry, of course. As one-third of Duluth, Minnesota's Low, Parker doen't lead a flashy, rock star existence. And

that's OK.

Along with her husband - gui-tarist and singer Alan Sparhawk - and Low's bassist Zak Sally, - and Low's bassist Zak Sally, the band has been a well-kept secret in the world of minimal melodic music. Low ventures into the quieter side, slowing it down with hushed melodies and intense profermores.

intense performances.

"This is kind of my dream band," said Parker, who was raised on country, not pop radio.

"This band is natural."

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It wasn't always so. Parker
claims she didn't want to join at
first. "Alan and I had been talking about it for years, getting a
band together. It never happened. Finally things just kind of
came together."

They came together in the
form of a self-titled EP and a
full-length album, I Could Live
In Hope, both reloased in 1994.

But Sparhawk nover predicted a
career in music. Despite growing
up on a musical diet of Van
Halen and '80s punk, the guitarist claims "it never really
made any sense. Even with Low,
I don't think we aver really
intended it to be something unti
we realized 'Wow, someone
wants to put out our record."

"When we started out, even

Listen like Low

Here are a few artists Low's Alan Sparhawk is bound to pop into the CD player: Otis Redding Nell Young Neil Young
The Dirty Three
Neutral Milk Hotel
Pedro The Lion
Moby

before I convinced Mim to join the band, we were playing slow, quiet music," said Sparhawk. The experiment began with one questlen: How low can they get away with and still make music? Seven years later, the band prepares for the Feb. 5 release of its eighth full-length album, Things We Lost In The Fire. Like 1999's Secret Name, Things We Lost In the Fire was recorded with producer Steve Albini (Nirvana).

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"I'd say this is the pure exploration of who we are," said Sparhawk. "It's still kind of has one foot in the punk cethic. It's more in the approach."

You might not hose anything remotely resembling Anarchy in the U.K. on Things We Lost., but songs like Dineasur Act boast plenty of fourzy rock distortion.

"We kind of see it as a progression of sorts," said Mimi. "The songs are a little more orchestrated. It's definitely our most paper record."

Low brought in some friends to work on the album – friends such as violnist Ida Pearl from Ida and samples by Mark de gill Antoni, formerly of Soul Coughing.



(Left to right) Alan Sparhawk, Mimi Parker and Zak Saily are Low.

"It felt like the songs were big-gor than us," said Sparhawk. "We were trying to catch up with these songs - to let them do what they wanted to do." Along with new album, Parker and Sparhawk welcomed the birth of their first child, a baby girl named Hollis. She's become quite an inspiration, Parker said.

said.
"One (song) in particular,
Embrace, is about the childbirth
process," she said. "We got a
remarkable (response) playing
that live. In Metal is kind of

about her, too

"We're definitely in baby mode. All the time. I guess it's made us think about touring and the band in a different way."

No fear for Low fans - at 6 months, Hollis had already secured a passport and seen the Eiffel Tower. 'She ends up kind of taking my mind off of other things,' said Parker, 'We all kind of help out. Zak loves bables to:

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Come out for Low and fill the place, 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, St. Andrews Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$10 for this all ages show. Call (313) 961-8961.

Stephanie Angelyn Casola writes about popular music for the Observer & Eccentric News papers. She can be reached at (734) 953-2130 or e-mail at scasola@ oe. homecomm. net 7 send a fax, dial (734) 591-7279.

CD REVIEWS

Clamp It Down

The Brothers Groove Little Fortissimo Music

Little Fertissimo Music
Anyone who. frequented
Detroit's Music Menu on Mondays in 2000 did so for one reason — The Brothers Grove. This
Detroit-based trio and former
BEAM grant winner released its
flawless debut Clamp It Doun,
just before the turn of the millennium. But chances are, fans
of blues, jazz and rock will be
grooving with them well into the

new year.

new year.

A fine work beginning with the relentless sing-along Pressure Cooker, the high energy My Girlfriend Too and the always infectious You Got That Thing, the CD explodes with the energy that could only come from vocalist Chris Codish – who explores the very depths of his own voice and truly walls on the keys. Add in equal parts of soulful bass guitar by Clarkston native Jim Simongon and an unparalleled

backbeat by drummer Michael Caskey, and The Brothers Groove dive in and out of rau-cous rhythm and envious style.

cous rhythm and envious style.

From Space Invader to the engaging She's a Dancer, Clamp It Down defines The Brothers Groove as an innovative and inspiring addition to the local music scene. Check them out every Thursday at the Music Menu in Detroit. See www.the-brothersgroove.com.

— By S. A. CASOLA





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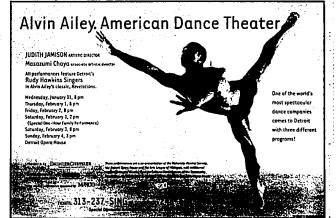
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