STREET SCENE

Spiral Stairs teaches Indie Rock 101



When Pave-ment disbanded in 2000, indic rock fans wore left clutching their copies of Terror Twilight, knowing it knowing it would be a trea-

Stephen Malk-mus ventured out with his solo record last spring, proving he could make it on his own. Now Spiral Stairs, brainchild of Pavement's most anthemic musical

moments, takes his turn at the head of the class. Preston School of Industry forces the spotlight on Berkley, California's Scott Kannberg (aka Spiral Stairs), and he isn't flinching.

"I guess it kind of really came together after the end of Pavement," he said during a phone interview Monday, Oct. 22. "It was six months after the last Pavement tour that Stephon. quit. By that time, I was writing songs. I wanted to do something of my own. I started working on it and had this creative buts of energy."

Working from a few Pavement leftovers and with a completely new group of musicians – some he'd mot soon after the band's split – Spiral Stairs debuted the

PRESTON SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY

Spiral Stairs is listening to...

- III The Shins
 III Super Furry Animals
 III Beulah
 III The Strokes
 III The White Stripes

new project with an EP and fol-lowed up with All This Sounds Gas, on Pavement's label Matador Records in August.

Kannberg knew he needed help with his solo project - after all he doesn't play pedal steel or trombone which are both fea-

tured instruments. He brought in Oranger's Jim Lindsay on drums and former Creeper Lagoon bassist Dan Carr.

And as expected, the record wins comparisons to his provious work. "I was kind of scared of that," he admitted. Now he feels it's therapeutic to be writing and

performing again. While Kannberg considers it "a little weird" and "a little frightening" to be onstage with a new band, he's about to embark on a 4-week American tour.

Just back from Europe, music fans seem to be flocking to Preston School of Industry. The name is derived from a reform school near Stockton, Calif. "It was home to delinquent boys back in the 50s. Merle Haggard went there."

And the intentions of this new band of delinquents? Spiral Stairs aimed to write "a good old-fashioned rock record." Per-haps relying a little more on the pop elements he's got down, the band succeeds. Songs like Monkey Heart and the Horse's Leg

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and Solitaire stand out in pop glory. The band just completed a video for the single Falling Away, an easy-to-spot highlight on this record.

on this record.

"The concept is very simple.
This guy - who is me - wakes up and starts crawling around."
During the course of the shoot, he was dressed up as REM's Peter Buck, Eche and the Bunymon's Will Sergeant and The Curo's Robert Smith, each which here as the influences in the mirror the influences in the song. "It's a pretty funny video," he added.

he added.

And when he's not performing, he's still running a small independent label, Amazing Grease. Records, home to Oranger, The Moore Brothers and more. As for Preston School of Industry, the band is looking forward to returning to the Detroit area. — Coney dogs and all. "The crowds in Detroit are always some of the best crowds in America," said Kannberg.

Learn more about Preston School of Industry, when they visit with The Shins and The Standard opening the show, 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, to the Magic Stick, Detroit. Tickets for this 18 and older concert are \$10 Call (248) 645-6666.

For more on PSOI, visit www.matadorrecords.com or www.amazinggrease.com

Stephanie Angelyn Casola writes about popular music for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She can be reached at (734) 953-2130 or e-mail at scasol@ oe.homecomm.net

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