

Two Bands With Deep St. Louis Roots Offer New Material (*keokuk edition*)

by Thomas Crone

Keokuk has a new LP out, and plays Artica on October 8 2016.

There are a few things that make Keokuk a unique band, not the least of which is that the group's got the rarity of a mother/son rhythm section in Andrea Spencer (drums) and Zane Spencer (bass). And the fact that core members Dominic Schaeffer (sax and loops) and Curt Hendricks (guitar and loops) spent years orbiting one another in the local independent rock scene before finally hooking up in a band that's something of Keokuk's predecessor, Pyschotronics.

But this band's very much an entity of its own, with Schaeffer's prominent sax work an element not heard in your typical rock 'n' roll band; while Hendricks' guitar work is definitely a sound that he's carried with him through underrated acts such as Electric Sheep and Plaid Cattle.

The songs on this one, he says, come from a four-year incubation, "One year of which we were just languishing, trying to figure out what we were gonna be." Whatever that process may've involved, when the group went into the Sawhorse Studios with recording engineer Jason McIntire earlier this year, they certainly had their act together.

At seven songs, Hendricks says, the band's debut is "kind of a long EP, or short album. We just prepared several songs and felt that if we got lucky, we'd get three, or four of them down. We rehearsed the hell out of them and went in, did them all, took no more than two takes on each song. It went really well."

The group is satisfied enough with the debut that it's already thinking about the next release, which could be an entire album of instrumentals.

In fact, the band's next gig will likely be strong with instrumental cuts. On Saturday, October 8, the group will play the freewheeling arts festival Artica for the second straight year, performing at dusk. Last year, it played the same event, and sounded great. Trains were passing, the bands was powered by portable generators, and attendees scattered throughout the area as the four-piece were able to blend in with the weirdness of all that surrounded them. This year, they'll be back at the site, near the hulking Cotton Belt building, for the second round at Artica.

If lucky, the whole group will be there, rather than just a trio; Schaeffer had hip surgery on Monday. By Wednesday, though, Hendricks was noting, "He's doing really, really well. He's already walking a bit, with a walker, of course. We know he really wants to do the gig."

Full article:

<https://www.stlmag.com/arts/music/two-bands-with-deep-st-louis-roots-offer-new-material/>