



Maine Vocals Presents 1 NIGHT ONLY!



June 4th, 2010 Freedom Field, Carson Hill Rd. Harmony, Maine Gate opens at noon

Tickets available @ www.mainevocals.net or 207-696-8167 \$25 in advance \$35 at gate

Feel the beat

Music Features

See all in Music Features

Friends' Activity

Popular

Most Viewed

Login You need to be logged into Facebook to see your friends' activity

Guru's guru – Music Features – Boston Phoenix

# Glacial tensions

The slow, brute force of Summerduck

By MATT PARISH | February 3, 2009

Like

@ TRACY POWELL



THINGS FALL APART: Summerduck's music makes a perfect accompaniment to a meditation on entropy.

O'Brien's Pub is great. The little Allston bar tends to be a blank slate for music where, in lieu of a full-on PA system, a band are left to their own devices. It can sound harsh and abrasive, muddy and unintelligible, and every kind of sketchy in between. A few weeks ago, Summerduck — a new band led by Farhad Ebrahimi (bassist for the sadly defunct Night Rally) — walked in and turned the place into a cathedral.

The four-piece — drums, bass, two guitars — take bits and pieces of sludge metal and allow it to crystallize in front of you, sliding from one chord to the next with extra-deliberate force and weight. Watching them at O'Brien's — where you could still hear a girl ordering whiskey sours from the other end of the room during quiet parts — was like finding an aircraft carrier floating in your bathtub.

A few days later, I meet Ebrahimi and bassist Greg Moss for afternoon coffee in Central Square (the line-up is rounded out by guitarist Nate McDermott of Paper Thin Stages and Michael Hutcherson, recently of Tiny Amps). Our talk swiftly turns to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey. "If you're going to have a movie that's that slow, where very little happens, and there's that little dialogue, it's got to be shot very well," says Ebrahimi. "I think a lot of bands are more like a James Cameron movie or, worse yet, Jerry Bruckheimer."

What does that have to do with Summerduck? It's the focus on details: the breaths of feedback between hammering chords, the delicately entwined harmonies climbing in and out of measures together, the long sequences of calibrated guitar whispers, and the Zen-like volume of their big, sustained climaxes. Ebrahimi: "The musical equivalent is that

### TODAY'S EVENT PICKS

[WORDS] Charu Saxena reads at Glickman; Louis Salome + Cathy Frierson talk at PPL

Plus 1 more >>



### ARTICLES BY MATT PARISH

MIXED SIGNALS | May 17, 2010

For those who heard German electronics maestro Felix Kubin slice the air with fried keyboards and speed-tweaked samples at Boston's Goethe-Institut last November, his return to the States couldn't come soon enough.

PERSON AND PERSONA | May 04, 2010

Folksie newcomer John Shade says that his songs are focused on identity and anonymity, but there's also what sounds like an unraveling personal economy lurking beneath: characters steal purses, check classifieds, go it alone with "no safety net," and generally feel like bums.

DISCO STEW | April 20, 2010

I've never been to a disco band's practice space, but I figured it would involve lots of velvet, mirrors, and other visions borrowed from the foggy-lens films they used to show at roller rinks. Was that naive of me?

WORCESTER ROCK CITY | April 13, 2010

When I first saw the gooey-inked hand-screened sleeve of the Golden Girls' recent Ultimate Freedom EP, not only did I get that stirring, satisfying feeling that it had come

Advertisement for Best Music Week featuring Downtown Crossing events on June 8, 9, and 10, presented by Budweiser and sponsored by MetroPCS and Vitamin Water.

Advertisement for Best Music Week featuring Downtown Crossing events on June 8 and 9, presented by Budweiser and sponsored by MetroPCS and Vitamin Water.

there's not a wasted note." The band are a study in slow-motion storytelling.

I'm tempted to insert some pop psychology here about how our civilization's ratcheting movement toward the oblivion of globalization is a thematic anchor for Summerduck. Maybe it is — Ebrahimi spends a lot of time buried in the *Economist*, and he questions the ethics of touring around the country in a van selling CDs (which he doesn't do). But the real seed of Summerduck is a bit more specific, more formalist: the '90s work of monolithic metal group Harvey Milk.

"I got into Harvey Milk around when I was starting to think about this music," Ebrahimi explains. "It just grabbed me — the combination of really interesting, almost orchestral arrangements and a sense of vulnerability in the vocals. It wasn't heavy music with aggressive, tough, scary vocals. There are these huge cathartic releases, and the singing is just this sad guy roaring about stuff he's upset about."

With Harvey Milk as a model, he set to work on slow-moving patterns and stretching out chords like threads across a loom. "In Night Rally, we also had that sense of being envelopingly pretty with the music. But it was mostly a happy accident. It was three friends saying we wanted to play together and see what happens. I wanted to try to be an architect."

1 | 2 | next >

**Topics:** [Music Features](#) , [Stanley Kubrick](#), [Michael Hutcherson](#), [Greg Moss](#), [More](#) ⊕

Be the first of your friends to like | [More](#)

### 1 Comments / Add Comment



**Sludgemulch**

This is NOT sludge metal!

Posted: February 13 2009 at 12:38 PM

[Report](#) ⓘ

Add Comment

HTML Prohibited

### Featured Articles in Music Features:

...and I get that biting, satirizing feeling that it had come straight from unsound minds confined to some DIY basement workshop, I also sort of got the creeps. But I think that's only because they're from Worcester.

■ [HAUS MUSIC](#) | March 17, 2010

On a sleepy side street in JP sits the Whitehaus, where, on a recent Saturday evening, muffled electronic gurgles and drones pulse from the basement like the sounds of some secret sci-fi laundromat. It's an experimental electronics night anchored by Boston synth overlord Keith Fullerton Whitman, but it could be any number of scenes that the Whitehaus has welcomed into its living room over the past four years.

[▶](#) See all articles by: [MATT PARISH](#)

### MOST POPULAR



Most Viewed	Most Emailed
<p>■ <a href="#">BERGAMOT</a> I guess the experimental-chef thing isn't over, after all. At least not at Somerville's Bergamot, the chosen sobriquet of which is "progressive American cuisine and a warm neighborhood setting."</p>	
<p>■ <a href="#">SECOND SIGHT</a> May in Boston has always been Storybook Ballet Month, as Boston Ballet finished off its season with Swan Lake or Sleeping Beauty or Don Quixote, something classical and highbrow and reassuring. That, after all, is what Boston audiences want, right?</p>	
<p>■ <a href="#">SLIDESHOW: HISTORY OF GURU AND GANG STARR</a> Here is our salute – in photo, audio, video, and writing – to a Roxbury legend and the vast Gang Starr legacy he left behind.</p>	
<p>■ <a href="#">BOSTON TUCKS AWAY A \$125 MILLION WINDFALL</a> As debate continues over the city's finances — and whether the city of Boston can afford firefighters' raises, branch libraries, community-center staffing, and other costs in tight times — the city is planning to quietly tuck away a one-time windfall of more than \$125 million.</p>	
<p>■ <a href="#">REVIEW: THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE</a> Just when you thought there could be nothing new under the horror-cinema sun, here comes Dutch director Tom Six with an astonishingly fiendish idea.</p>	

### HOT TOPICS

[Major League Baseball](#) , [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) , [David Hoose](#) , [Bruce Springsteen](#) , [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#) , [Joy Division](#) , [Jessica Rylan](#) , [Boston Symphony Orchestra](#) , [The Beatles](#) , [Trent Reznor](#)

[▶](#) More Topics . . .

### LATEST SLIDESHOWS



[Slideshow: History of Guru and Gang Starr](#)



[Photos: Moms Rock](#)

[▶](#) All Slideshows





Maine Vocals Presents 1 NIGHT ONLY!



June 4th, 2010 Freedom Field, Carson Hill Rd. Harmony, Maine Gate opens at noon

Tickets available @ www.mainevocals.net or 207-696-8167 \$25 in advance \$35 at gate

Feel the beat

Music Features

See all in Music Features

# Glacial tensions

By MATT PARISH | February 3, 2009

Like

"Architecture" is a good word for it; Summerduck's music can be tough to take in from any one angle. The ideas at play on their debut EP, *Good Luck, Summerduck* (available at shows and on the Internet), unfold so carefully that you can almost see the decisions being made as they occur. "Little Henry's Heart Is Not in the Right Place," the nine-minute second track, moves from intimate spaces where you can hear the pick resting on the guitar strings into enormous quakes of distortion. After two big climaxes that might make the Melvins run for cover, a scrappy acoustic guitar shows up and rewinds the whole thing into an almost folksy coda.

Ebrahimi has developed a brassy baritone croon with shades of a more hulking Morrissey to convey his optimistically bummed lyrics. "Centralia" plays around a long-burning coal fire in Pennsylvania that's just about wiped out the town, sending its only source of income up in poisonous fumes, but the song also alludes to generations of sometimes violent labor struggle going all the way back to the Molly Maguires. "So we fight as we were shown/And we hang as we will show" is about as bleak as it gets for someone looking for hope in old causes.

The combustible, toxic coal vein is also a fitting subject for what amounts to a metal band digging deeper. Most of the good nature metaphors — mountains, weather patterns, planets — have been used up on crummier metal bands, so I'll just say that Summerduck's music makes the perfect accompaniment to a meditation on entropy. It's poison gas seeping out of the mountainside, glaciers dripping into the sea, and finding a human way to reckon with all of it.

Ebrahimi: "A lot of it's about science. But a lot of it's about the beauty in watching things completely, slowly falling apart."

SUMMERDUCK + PILES + HERO(N) OF ALEXANDRIA | Middle East upstairs, 472 Mass Ave, Cambridge | February 10 at 9 pm | \$9 | 617.864.EAST or mideastclub.com

< prev 1 | 2 |

Related: , , More

Topics: Music Features, Stanley Kubrick, Michael Hutcherson, Greg Moss, More

Like

Be the first of your friends to like this.

More

## 1 Comments / Add Comment



Sludgemulch

This is NOT sludge metal!

Posted: February 13 2009 at 12:38 PM

Report

Add Comment

HTML: Prohibited

Friends' Activity

Popular

Most Viewed

Login You need to be logged into Facebook to see your friends' activity

Guru's guru – Music Features – Boston Phoenix

### TODAY'S EVENT PICKS

[WORDS] Charu Saxena reads at Glickman; Louis Salome + Cathy Frierson talk at PPL

Plus 1 more >>

SO MANY CRUISES TO CHOOSE FROM: Parade of Sail • Moonlight Sunset • Lobster Lunch Dinner • And More!

### ARTICLES BY MATT PARISH

MIXED SIGNALS | May 17, 2010

For those who heard German electronics maestro Felix Kubin slice the air with fried keyboards and speed-tweaked samples at Boston's Goethe-Institut last November, his return to the States couldn't come soon enough.

PERSON AND PERSONA | May 04, 2010

Folksie newcomer John Shade says that his songs are focused on identity and anonymity, but there's also what sounds like an unraveling personal economy lurking beneath: characters steal purses, check classifieds, go it alone with "no safety net," and generally feel like bums.

DISCO STEW | April 20, 2010

I've never been to a disco band's practice space, but I figured it would involve lots of velvet, mirrors, and other visions borrowed from the foggy-lens films they used to show at roller rinks. Was that naive of me?

WORCESTER ROCK CITY | April 13, 2010

When I first saw the gooey-inked hand-screened sleeve of the Golden Girls' recent Ultimate Freedom EP, not only did I get that stirring, satisfying feeling that it had come

DOWN CROSSING BLOCK PARTIES SUMMER ST. | DOWNTOWN CROSSING PRESENTED BY Budweiser THURSDAYS, 5-8pm FREE 21+ OPEN to the PUBLIC DJ, PRIZES, FOOD, COCKTAILS + MORE. sbs THE BOSTON PHOENIX 101.7 WFNX

BEST MUSIC WEEK POWERED BY BEST MUSIC POLL Presented by: Budweiser DOWNTOWN CROSSING JUNE 8 "GARAGE NIGHT" JUNE 9 "BLOG NIGHT"