

Pinback at Avalon

Those kings of modern-day jingle-jangle Pinback are back with more ethereal-pop bliss than ever. Despite a title that evokes a Finnish black-metal album, *Autumn of the Seraphs* is full of the arpeggiating guitars and intricate coils of plucked bass the San Diego duo are known for. Not only that, Zach Smith and Rob Crow's feathery crisscrossing vocals fuel the sort of personal musings that make you think, but — thank god — not too much. Their previous album, 2004's *Summer in Abaddon*, is considered their commercial breakthrough, but for this fan *Seraphs* is the melodic, more upbeat return to form that sees them focusing on gooseflesh-inducing songs, reining in the side projects and saving the good stuff for, well, Pinback. (Even so, Crow's 2003 solo disc, *My Room Is a Mess*, is a delightful one-off totally worth checking out.) These mild-mannered guys don't seem like they'd have a sense of humor, but when they do crack wise, it's always a zinger. (Andrew Lentz)

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