

# CMJ's Hottest Bands: 10 Buzz-Worthy Breakouts

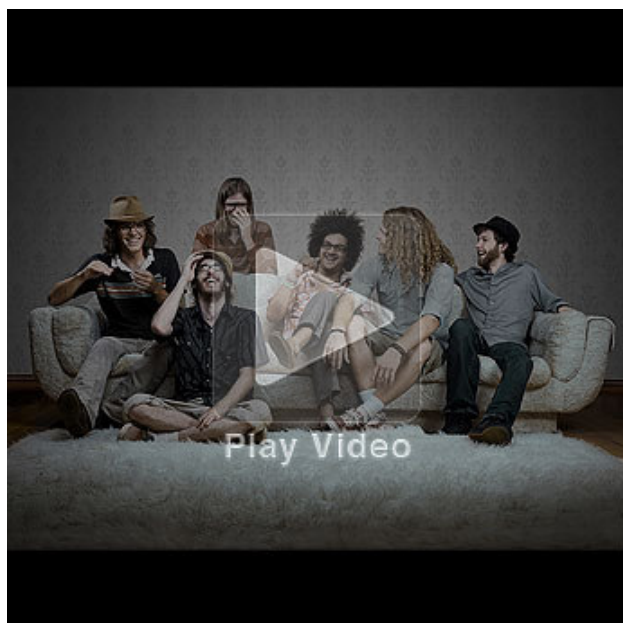
*Each fall a thousand bands descend on New York City - here's a guide to the best, from the Uglysuit to Ponytail*

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## The Uglysuit

One afternoon this summer, Oklahoma City indie-pop sextet the Uglysuit were cruising on a highway on their way to Tulsa's D-Fest to support headliners like the Roots and All-American Rejects. It was a huge step for the band: a rare chance to leave their small town to play one of their biggest gigs yet. But frontman Israel Hindman thought they wouldn't make it when a cop cruised up behind them blaring his sirens. "We thought he was pulling us over, but he just blinked his lights to go around us," he says.

Chances are, the Uglysuit were obeying the speed limit. The group's six mild-mannered members are religious kids who met at a Christian school and honed their chops playing in church bands. On their self-titled debut disc — which they showed off at a packed CMJ show at the Cake Shop — they deliver 10 stunning tunes that range from Brit-pop-style ballads ("Happy Yellow Rainbow") to atmospheric, jazz-tinged explorations ("Brownblue's Passing") to gorgeous piano-powered anthems ("Chicago").

Believe it or not, before Hindman teamed up with his current chamber-pop outfit — which features frontman

Colin Bray and his brother Crosby, alongside multi-instrumentalists Kyle Mayfield, Jonathan Martin and Matt Harrison — he fronted various screamo and hardcore bands. "It was just a stage in our life," says Hindman, adding that his parents and teachers were supportive of him playing such rebellious music. "But eventually we just wanted to go from playing fast punk to really touching people's hearts."

The Uglysuit may be a crew of deeply religious kids, but they've taken to the hard lifestyle of playing in a rock band: Mayfield even admits he enjoys a joint from time to time: "Smoking is a wonderful thing," he says. And the rest of the guys have gradually loosened up on pre-show prayer circles. "It's just what happens when you grow older," says Hindman. "Nowadays, it's just like, 'Man, I can't wait to get onstage and just play!' "

So what's up with very-punk-sounding band name? "We've always enjoyed dressing in ugly suits from thrift stores," says Hindman. "Everyone tells us we look like old men. We figured why not just go out front with the idea?" KEVIN O'DONNELL

**Click the top photo to watch a special acoustic rendition of "Chicago."**

**[Click here to watch the band play "Brad's House"](#)**