

SLAP

SKATEBOARD MAGAZINE

October 2008 Issue #197



The Ugly Suit *The Ugly Suit* (Quarterstick)

★★★★☆

The Ugly Suit is a group of six lads that hail from Oklahoma. In their early 20s now, they've reportedly been playing since their teens and have just released their debut record. Patience paid off, for it is a tightly-constructed and gorgeous album full of wonder and appreciation for many things. Fans of sunshiny-pop, shoegazer layering, multi-instrumentation, and longish

songs that build to crescendos a-lá Explosions in the Sky should give this a gander.

The opening track, "Brownblue's Passing," sets the stage for what you're about to get into. The first minute starts off slowly, loosely, somberly, shrouded in several guitars playing anything from muted tones to swirling colored feedback. The singer casts his words pensively and plaintively. Then, abruptly yet skillfully, the band breaks into another part, shifting the tempo upward. The music is bright, but there is a palpable sense of melancholy that lies just beneath the surface. Perhaps it's even a sense of being overwhelmed, for the singer keeps muttering "how beautiful" over and over. (And if he happens to be speaking about the song he's playing, well, he's right.) The song eventually crescendos, consuming itself in a blaze as we move onto the next song, "Chicago." Don't be misled by this accordion-laced ditty, because it is something of an anomaly on the album, coming off like an unwitting hit-single or even the intro of a TV show. It does, at least, display the group's knack for crafting memorable melodies. Also, like all of their songs, there is a feeling of innocence that falls just short of naiveté. Or maybe full on into it, I can't tell—and lines like: "Where did I begin to drift off to that I think that I could fly?" don't help me decide either.

Criticisms? Not many, but the build-up-to-crescendo formula will probably get tiresome for a few, and some may feel that all of the songs sound too similar. Including more short or distinctive songs like "Chicago" would've remedied this and helped to break the album up. But still, it's hard to complain about a set of songs of such caliber. The Ugly Suit is a thing of beauty. —Guy Gray

Standout track: "Brownblue's Passing"