

The End of That, by Plants and Animals February 28, 2012

Fall.

“Let’s make a new record,” they say. “How do we do this? Let’s do it differently—let’s write a whole pile of songs and develop them big time before we go into the studio to record—let’s not do the fly-by-the-seat-of-our-pants routine for a change—too crazy, too pressed. Let’s create in a cave, off the clock, take some time. Like normal people,” they say. “I’ll book the Treatment Room for rehearsals and demoing,” says Nic Basque.

Winter.

They meet in the afternoons. The Treatment Room is the studio in Montreal where they had recorded *Parc Avenue* and most of *La La Land*. The walls are white and brown and it’s dark in there. Outside it’s dark too. The city is white and brown and frozen solid. They set up some microphones and record into a laptop. Warren Spicer brings in the ideas. He’s brimming with them. He’s been spending time in a place with a piano, and sometimes that’s the tool of choice. Other times he’s on the acoustic guitar. It had been given a bit of a break on the last record. It’s full of life.

They play. Warren is geometry, flesh and feel. Nic is the colour man. He’s the guitar equivalent of taking a handsome blue blazer and turning it inside out to its pink, paisley innards like the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. He has a big, messy pile of pedals and a little amp called a Kalamazoo that sings like a cicada. Woodman goes thump thump on the drums like an octopus or ting ting like a daddy longlegs. Searching for something slanted, settling on something simple.

Spring.

They take a break from demoing. Nic distributes the pile of raw songs among his bandmates. Warren goes home and fills in lyrical holes. He is bold, straight-up and singular. His voice has grown throatier, chestier, more lived in. He has never sung like this before. The sun has come out and Warren bangs out a couple sunnier numbers that the band will tackle in the studio, just like they said they wouldn’t. Who doesn’t love the sun?

The Studio is La Frette, outside of Paris. They had had a taste of it before. La Frette is a great big old manor with a great big old vintage board that feels like the helm of a mighty ship. They sleep there, eat there, play there. They enjoy cheese and drink wine. The birds sing outside from sun up until sundown. They set up in the living room, la bibliothèque, the wine cellar, the piano room in the basement.

The whole two weeks is spring birds and blossoms. No it isn’t. Woodman hasn’t done his homework. Warren gets stressed. The studio can be an unforgiving servant. But they have an amazing engineer and outside ear, Lionel Darenne, who has just gotten back from recording Feist on the California coast and is palm tree breezy. Somewhere around day five, something begins to click. Somewhere around day 10, the neighbour complains that it’s Sunday and he doesn’t want “le rock ‘n’ roll” while he hosts a family reunion in his backyard. They take a forced day off, extend their flights to ease things up and buy enough time to finish their tracking at a lower pressure pace. Sounds so simple. It was epic. And that was the end of that.

Summer

Mixing. Mixing, mixing, mixing. Is it really important? Much more interesting is this: Bass. “Let’s starting playing live with a bass player,” the band say together.

Plants and Animals have been playing together for 10 years. They began as an instrumental group. They recorded a self-titled record in 2002 with 15-minute songs. They played around Montreal for years, no vocals, heavy on the improvising. Warren started singing with other people, and soon enough he just couldn’t contain himself. Silence became ooohs, ooohs became words.

In 2008, a project two years in the making became *Parc Avenue* and they stepped out onto the circuit for the first time. It had guitars and drums and vocals, and orchestration out the wazoo. It was nominated for one Polaris prize, two Junos and three GAMIQs. They opened for Grizzly Bear in Montreal, and did their first tour with Wolf Parade. Danger Mouse got his paws on it and invited them to open for Gnarls Barkley, and later Broken Bells. The National invited them to open for them in Central Park. They headlined stages across North America and Europe.

In 2010, they released *La La Land*, a heavier, darker departure from *Parc Avenue* that has become a veritable cult favourite. They played over 100 shows that year, including a long US tour with Frightened Rabbit. To the Pitchfork Festival appearance the summer before, they added to the list such notables as Primavera in Barcelona, Bumbershoot in Seattle, End of the Road in the English countryside, a marquee spot at the Montreal Jazz Festival, and many more.

If Plants and Animals were a person, *Parc Avenue* is that person around eight years old—excited, wide-eyed, scatterbrained and innocent. *La La Land* is that person in adolescence—the body changing in exciting and confusing ways, cocky and insecure, bold and volatile, oily. *The End of That* marks the 20s—confident in a new, unmasked way, young, excited, going through some shit, will be at the party tonight.

Fall.

“We love the bass,” both the band and the crowd chorus. “It gels everything together and makes it so multilayered and dynamic and sexy and huge.”

Winter.

The End of That comes February 28, 2012.

FOR PRESS INQUIRIES:

USA – Jessica Linker | Pitch Perfect PR - jessica@pitchperfectpr.com, 773-271-6844

USA – Jacob Daneman | Pitch Perfect PR - jacob@pitchperfectpr.com, 773-271-6844

Canada – Anastasia Saradoc | EMI - anastasia.saradoc@emimusic.ca, 416-583-5017

Quebec – Magali Ould | Secret City Records – magali@secretcityrecords.com, 514-658-5962