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ILAD – *HERE//THERE* OUT JULY 28, 2009 ON SYJIP RECORDS

ILAD is a quartet from Richmond, VA formed in the winter of 2004 that quickly became notorious for its adventurous tendencies and indefinable sound amongst local fans. The idea for forming the band originally began as a vision shared between guitarist, Clifton McDaniel and keyboardist and electronicist Gabe Churray, who both studied classical composition together in college. Upon graduating, McDaniel and Churray started writing and rehearsing music as a duo for a band that they prophesied would exist. McDaniel's longtime friend and collaborator, Scott Clark, who at the time was working as a freelance drummer in Richmond, eventually joined the band. Clark in turn recommended his preferred bassist, Cameron Ralston, who was playing bass for local salsa legends, Bio Ritmo and would eventually fill the bass chair for the burgeoning creative ensemble, Fight The Big Bull. Clark and Ralston had been playing in various free-jazz and improvisational ensembles for a couple of years and had quickly become one of the most sought-after rhythm sections in and around Richmond. It was this fateful union between improvisational spirit and compositional mind that birthed ILAD, a band whose material reads like a series of minimalist poems adorned by flourishes of sound and blooming tones, and as such, leaves the listener wanting.

ILAD's debut, *The Spoon*, was released in 2005 on their own SYJIP Records and immediately established themselves as one of the most forward-reaching bands to come out of the area. They followed *The Spoon* with *National Flags*, recorded at Chicago's SOMA studios with John McEntire (Tortoise, The Sea and Cake, Stereolab, etc.). *National Flags* showcased a band in the midst of honing its songwriting craft and deepening its groove, and it was well liked amongst their local fan base, but ultimately received little national attention. Humbled, yet inspired by the experience, the following year and a half was a fruitful period of constant writing, rehearsing, performing and recording and would finally culminate into ILAD's, *Here//There*. Coalescing the experimental verve of their debut, *The Spoon*, with the more focused song-writing and groove-based styling of *National Flags*; plus an expanded sound palette as the band incorporates more piano and guitars, samples, Hammond organ, Wurlitzer, Casio keyboards, accordion, clarinet, wood flutes, didgeridoo, banjo, throat-singing, glockenspiel, various shakers, chimes, small wooden and metal percussion, and more, *Here//There* showcases a band maturing into its own as a unique and uncompromising voice on the music scene at large.

"*Here, there....we still gawn move*" are the first words you hear on ILAD's new album, muttered from what sounds like a tape loop played in reverse. Such is the parallel universe of ILAD, as they rely on a ghost in the machine to not only lay claim to the title of their new record, but to affirm a musical mantra for which the following 15 songs must dutifully follow. On *Here//There*, they never stay in one place for too long, effortlessly transitioning from the Bollywood-leaning opener "TV Sutra" to old-fashioned Neil Young-esque songs like "Mexico", cosmic free jazz a la late 1960's Alice Coltrane & Pharaoh Sanders blissfulness on "I'm Not Mean", Phillip Glass-style minimalism on "Wish for a Flood", Quincy Jones-era Michael Jackson dance grooves on "Extraordinary Machine" to southern country-rockers doused in whiskey and stale beer on "Black Gold" and "December". And just when you think this playful game of musical chairs could be a novelty act, they drive a knife into your heart with a tender ballad like "Everyone Hurts Everyone" or "I Just Stopped By". The fact of the matter is, ILAD is not only able to play all of these styles quite well; ILAD is able to play, and *blend*, these styles in a soulful and focused manner that is wholeheartedly their own, easily eluding categorization altogether.

ILAD has shared the stage with The Sea and Cake, Thao Ngyugen and the Get Down Stay Down, These United States, Lymbyc System, Death Vessel, Tim Williams, Josh Small, Fight the Big Bull, The Great White Jenkins among many others. ILAD will be touring in support of its upcoming release *Here//There* and its little brother, *We Still Gawn Move*, an EP recorded during the same session, throughout 2009.

For more information contact Pitch Perfect PR – jessica@pitchperfectpr.com, 773-784-4335, www.pitchperfectpr.com.
And visit: <http://www.iladmusic.com/ilad/>, <http://www.myspace.com/ilad>.

LOCAL BIN



Ilad, "National Flags"

Richmond's own Ilad takes cues from smooth and ambient jazz, pop and a few other genres the foursome discover in their improvising. They're not above sampling the work of others, either, especially for a message. The second track, "D.O.I.," is the Declaration of Independence, as in the one written by Thomas Jefferson, set to haunting smooth rock. Most of the songs combine an ethereal mood with almost-whispered vocals by Gabe Churray, backed up by Cameron Ralston (bass) and Clifton McDaniel (guitar).

One of the standout tracks is "Looking Glass," which showcases Scott Clark's crackling military jazz drumming, packaged within mellow, thinking man's pop. You can't get too comfortable, though, because the next track, "You Don't Need That Shit," picks up the pace and ends up wailing with some Ornette Coleman freestyle dissonance courtesy of McDaniel's guitar. Richmonders can catch Ilad every Tuesday night at Cary Street Café. ★★★★★ — Sarah Moore

PERFORMER



Ilad — National Flags

Produced by Ilad
Mastered by Roger Seibel at SAE Mastering
Recorded and mixed by John McEntire at SOMA E.M.S.

WASHINGTON
CityPaper

CITY LIGHTS THIS WEEK'S BEST

Songs titled after the Declaration of Independence seem more likely to be found blaring in the background of a pickup ad than on an album of downtempo jazz-rock. In fact, Ilad's spacey soundscapes would be more at home backing some dystopian, Philip K. Dick-esque sci-fi epic. Granted, the Richmond, Va., band's sparse, postrock-influenced output raises suspicions that songs such as "D.O.I." are actually Tortoise tracks with lyrics, albeit lyrics that are understated and, at times, barely audible, creating more of an atmosphere than a narrative. So the fact that Tortoise's John McEntire mixed and recorded 2007's *National Flags* at his Soma Studios should surprise no one, but what remains perplexing is how the quartet has managed to quietly put out two solid albums only to remain shrouded in relative obscurity. ILAD PERFORMS WITH SUN COMMITTEE AND PERFECT SOUVENIR AT 9:30 PM. AT THE RED AND THE BLACK, 1212 H ST. NE, S8. (202) 399-3201.

—Maggie Serota

Ilad's second full-length release *National Flags* is a number of things: atmospheric, trippy, overwhelming, an unbiased fusion of genres, inspired — and it's also quite good. Ilad is comprised of Gabe Churray (keyboard, vocals), Cameron Ralston (bass, vocals), Clifton McDaniel (vocals, guitar) and Scott Clark (drums). The Virginia quartet mixes jazz-inflected prog-rock with psychedelic pop and a dash of electronica.

This CD sounds as though E.L.O. and Sound Tribe Sector 9 got together with Dave Brubeck in some subterranean lab millions of years from now. Any keyboard solos meander into up-tempo jazz meltdowns, while the drums provide a steady balance to the

disorder. Ilad manages not to fall into the "jam band" category by staying away from improvised guitar solos and extended chord progressions.

On the entire CD, the keyboard and drums stand out as the most prominent instruments, as they provide most of the discernible melody. The lyrics are often ambiguous, sometimes amounting to no more than "oohs" and "aahs" sung where words would be normally. The lyrics that are intelligible speak of things outside the normal scope of subjective reality.

The CD starts with the appropriately titled song "Preamble," an instrumental opener that's more of an ambient sound collage than an actual song. Songs like "Looking Glass" and "National Flags" follow more basic song patterns that distract from the druggy, psychedelic arrangements of songs like "You Don't Need That Shit." Ilad's *National Flags* is interesting to say the least, but may be a little too daunting for anyone who isn't already a fan of math or prog-rock. (SYJIP Records)

www.iladmusic.com

—Charley Lee