



You could be forgiven for mistaking Vetiver for a freak-folk band based on the company they keep. They've toured and recorded with freak-folk pioneers Vashti Bunyan and Joanna Newsom, and Devendra Banhart, the godfather of the freak-folk scene, was even an early member of the group.

But there isn't anything particularly freaky about Vetiver. Though their influences run deep and obscure—and are nicely summed up on their 2008 covers album *Thing of the Past*, which reprises songs by little-knowns like Dia Joyce, Elyse Weinberg, Bill Rose and Garland Jeffreys—their sound isn't too far removed from the Beatles/Byrds/Bob Dylan comfort zone. Shared social circle

aside, Vetiver's lived-in folk has little in common with Newsom's fairy-tale fantasies or Banhart's ostentatious, psychedelic jams.

The lone constant in Vetiver's revolving line-up is singer/songwriter Andy Cabc, an indie-rocker turned folkie who sings in the dulcet tones of Jeff Tweedy at his most rested. Guest players like Banhart have come and gone as schedules allowed. My Bloody Valentine's Colm O'Cioisig and Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval both contributed to the group's self-titled 2004 album, flagging the attention of some critics, but Vetiver has yet to garner the same following as some of the group's freakier friends.

That could change with the release of *Tight Knit*, the group's fourth album and their first for Sub Pop. Following its successes with late-'80s grunge rock and turn-of-the-century indie-rock, that famed Seattle label is now in the middle of its third renaissance, this time bolstering the current folk revival. Vetiver seems a logical acquisition for a label that now houses Iron and Wine and Fleet Foxes.

*Tight Knit* is a mellow, peaceful introduction to the band, as welcoming as an outstretched hand. Ironically, although Vetiver's line-up has solidified somewhat on the road recently, the group has never sounded more like a solo project than it does here. On many of the more stripped-down, immediate songs, Cabc played most instruments by himself, but that lends the album an inviting intimacy, fitting for an album that so genially evokes memories of long summer evenings spent with good friends.—ER

