



Vetiver

BY KEVIN FRIEDMAN

“EVERYBODY NEEDS A NAME, RIGHT?” Andy Cabcic says of his decision to name his band, *Vetiver*, after the Indian grass used in 90 percent of the world’s perfumes. “I used to work at a bookstore and one of my co-workers wore it.” He reveals this reluctantly, as if he can’t understand why anyone would really care. “I do not possess the qualities to describe myself,” he explains. “I sort of cringe at the thought of it.”

Cabcic’s music is at once of the moment and timeless, which might explain why it’s difficult to get him to commit to a genre or time period for reference. *Vetiver*’s last album, *Thing of the Past*, is a collection of covers of some of Cabcic’s favorite artists, such as The Holy Modal Rounders, Townes Van Zandt and Garland Jeffries—songs originally released between 1967 and 1973. While his music is heavily influenced by psychedelic folk from that era, Cabcic resists the moniker of anachronism. “I listen to all kinds of music, some of it old, but I’m perfectly aware of what’s happening now. It seems that attention to detail and arrangement is found a lot in songs from the ‘60s and ‘70s.”

Vetiver is a prominent member of the thriving Freak Folk/Naturalismo movement from which Cabcic’s close friend and frequent bandmate, Devendra Banhart, is the most prominent figure. The two were introduced

in San Francisco shortly after Cabcic relocated from Greensboro, North Carolina (with *Vetiver* guitarist Sanders Trippe and bassist Brent Dunn), sometime between 2001 and 2003—Cabcic isn’t quite sure anymore. “The first time we hung out we went to see the movie *Benjamin Smoke* at the Castro Theatre,” he recalls. “Afterwards we went back to Devendra’s apartment and played music for the rest of the night. We’ve been hanging out ever since.”

During this time, Cabcic also played with the post-rock group Tussle and collaborated with Joanna Newsom, Mazzy Star’s Hope Sandoval, and Colm O’Ciosoig of My Bloody Valentine, who all contributed to *Vetiver*’s debut in 2004. Despite these associations and collaborations with artists like Banhart and rediscovered folk legend Vashti Bunyan, whose forthcoming album Cabcic is slated to produce, there are aspects to *Vetiver*’s sound that are entirely unique. The music is rooted in acoustic folk but layered in texture (strings, harmonies, organ) to create a sprawling sonic landscape that is broad, ethereal and gossamer without being overly dense.

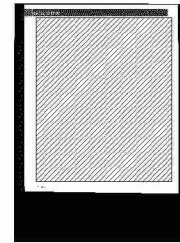
Tight Knit (to be released this winter by Sub Pop) is *Vetiver*’s fourth full-length. It includes sounds consistent to previous albums—blending Syd Barrettesque acoustic tunes with lush arrangements—but

jumps genres with little warning: from meditative folk to the dippy pop of “More of This” and weird folk-funk on “Another Reason to Go.” The jaunty track “Everyday” bounces along like a stoned summer’s day and could have escaped from Jack Johnson’s *Curious George* soundtrack. On “Down From Above,” Cabcic’s plaintive vocals float over an eiderdown of sound, creating the musical equivalent to a Maxfield Parrish painting. Such forays pale in comparison to opener “Rolling Sea,” with its wistful melody and extended outro of hypnotic slide guitar, and “Through the Front Door,” with its Nilsson-meets-B.J. Thomas saunter setting a loping pace as it tells the tale of a bittersweet goodbye amid gorgeous harmonies, subtle horns and gentle piano lines.

Cabcic admits that his albums are more a collection of songs than a pre-considered and cohesive whole. “It seemed really disparate; I wasn’t sure how to sequence it,” he says of *Tight Knit*. “It sounds like an amalgam of things I’ve touched upon on past albums, but this time around it seems like they’re all included.”

So while self-examination, descriptions and even cohesion may continue to vex him, Cabcic’s correct that it doesn’t really matter—that’s a job better left to critics. His is merely to continue mining history to create his own beautiful music. **F**

ALISSA ANDERSON



3 albums that inspired Vetiver’s Andy Cabcic to make music



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO

Though not a proper album of theirs, it is the one I’ve listened to the most. It’s got everything. I never tire of hearing it.



MICHAEL HURLEY

Snockgrass
 Snock in full-band regalia. “O My Stars” puts me at ease, a quality Hurley has in spades.



RAIN PARADE
Emergency Third Rail Power Trip

David Roback’s pre-Opal & Mazzy Star outfit. A great psychedelic pop album. My dub of this had The Replacements’ *Tim* on the flip-side, so either one would qualify.