

## HANDSOME FURS ★★★☆☆

### *Face Control*

#### Emotions on ice, no chaser.



In many ways, Handsome Furs' second disc, *Face Control*, is far superior to their debut, *Plague Park*. Brisker tempos and curveball ideas—from New Order wracked with paranoia to cyborg-fronted girl groups—alleviate the monotony that often dragged down *Park*. Vocalist Dan Boeckner (who's also in Wolf Parade) coaxes out brittle electric guitar melodies fraught with bluesy distortion and serrated edges. His wife and creative foil, Alexei Perry, matches this harshness with Cold War electronic beats and keyboards that sound like an apocalyptic Nintendo game (highlights "Legal Tender" and "I'm Confused" are pogo-pop for the doomed). The downside? *Park*'s chilled atmospheres triggered empathy, but *Control*'s lyrics—which are influenced by Eastern European stoicism, isolation and control—cause emotional detachment. The net effect is unsettling distance, not pointed commentary. (SUB POP; [subpop.com](http://subpop.com)) *Annie Zaleski*

