

Scots defy genre label

John Priest
Staff Reporter

My Latest Novel is the best thing to come out of Scotland since the man skirt.

Giving fellow Scots Belle and Sebastian a run for its money, My Latest Novel dishes out a delightful range of old-world chants mixed with melancholic lullabies in its debut album, "Wolves."

I was lucky enough to catch their eclectic tunes at the University of London last fall, and as the five-piece band began to play, a curious hush fell across the crowd. My Latest Novel's intelligent combination of old school instruments and humble theatrics commanded our attention like an old friend.

Complemented by violins, cellos, xylophones, full-throated percussion and multi-layered vocals, this sympathetic symphony of sound soars above the competition. The heart of "Wolves" lies in the music itself.

"Ghost in the Gutter," the first track, begins with a four-minute instrumental – the perfect introduction to the band.

The drums beat and the violins hum to an ecstatic vocal vertex. Subsequent songs also digress into this exotic power play.

The markedly depressing fourth track, "The Hope Edition," incorporates whistling, clapping and similarly long musical interludes into its emotional implosion.

Their first single, "Sister Sneaker Sister Soul," is six minutes of jaw-dropping musical euphoria. Starting gently with delicate acoustic arrangements and simple lyrics, it then "bah-bahs" away from the cutesy love formula into an instrumental attack that should have The Decemberists watching their backs. For the grand finale, My Latest Novel combines clashing drums, squeaking violins and distorted guitars in a harmonic

epiphany that is an orgasm for the ears. Musical excellence meets poetic brilliance on this album. Admitting influence from Jack Kerouac and Aldous Huxley, lead singer and principle songwriter Chris Deveney constructs a surreal world of unrequited love and undefined dreams in

CD Review
My Latest Novel
"Wolves"
Label: Bella Union
Release: March 9



photo courtesy of Jo Horton
Band members Paul McGeachy, Laura McFarlane, Ryan King, Gary Deveney and Chris Deveney.

his hazy daze of lyrical illusion.

With four-part harmonies belting out lyrics such as, "Pulling out my hair, pulling out my hair / crushed by a plastic Lego man," you'll be sucked into this fantasy as soon as you press play. Weirdness doesn't rule here, though. Through it all, "Wolves" maintains a pop sensibility much like

Sufjan Stephens or The National.

But don't try to peg My Latest Novel's genre. These folk-inspired, indie-rock songs often break their own rules. Any song off "Wolves" would fit into any musical subgroup you could devise – this album from across the pond is just that good.

With the promise that more

Nickelback/Hoobastank "rock" songs soon will be polluting summer airwaves, preemptively attack mainstream mediocrity with a purchase of true individuality.

At the very least, head to mylatestnovel.com/Mp3Page.htm and download "Sister Sneaker Sister Soul" and "The Hope Edition."

Band of Horses' debut stampedes mediocrity

John Priest
Staff Reporter

Last April, I took a long-time crush to see Iron and Wine in concert.

Much to my surprise, the opening act, Band of Horses, stole the show and my heart.

Little has changed a year later. There's no crush left in my crush, and with its debut release, Band of Horses has proven it still deserves my love.

Band of Horses delivers delicious music in an emotionally raw package that begs to be devoured. "Everything All the Time" is

Southern rock for the 21st century, a delicate mix of twangy guitars, love-lost ballads and indie pop self-reflection.

This band has transplanted from South Carolina to indie-haven Seattle, but its Southern roots shine through at every stop.

From start to finish, lead singer Ben Bridwell's haunting vocals warble their way to a high-pitch pinnacle, manipulating emotions like none other.

This recipe for great music calls for a dash of Yes, a healthy dose of The Shins, a shake or two of Neil Young and four or five pinches of The Arcade Fire. The resulting

blend naturally transcends tradi-

tional rock, but redefining labels does not make Band of Horses outrageously cutting edge.

It simply knows what it does well, and does it.

The simple arrangements of "Everything" will not shock you, but these anthems

whisper to dreamy climaxes as perfect as any paradox.

The clever production dangles on the edges of depression and joy, subtlety and lucidity, the awkward and the comfortable, the familiar and the obscure.

The best example of this mystery is "Funeral." Isolated and

angst-driven, this track revolves around its delicately euphonious guitar and Bridwell's painful cries, alternately fresh and grating while fighting toward the melodious chorus, "At every occasion / I'll be ready for the funeral."

Bridwell's sincere songwriting drives this album.

For those of you looking for new lyrical additions to your away messages, look no further than "Monsters," where a banjo and guitar accompany Bridwell while he sings, "If I am lost / it is only for a little while" or "Wicked Girl" where he sings, "I know evil people will say things / they don't

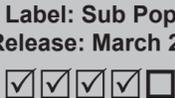
know."

Elsewhere, Band of Horses blurs the line between rock and country with traditional guitars and tragic love songs. "I Go to the Barn Cause I Like The" opens with Bridwell singing, "I'd like to think I'm a mask / you'd wear with pride."

For a limited time, four songs are available to download on the band's Web site, bandofhorses.com/music.htm.

Download them, listen to them and buy the album because with each song graciously giving way to the next, this 10-song set will leave you wanting more.

CD Review
Band of Horses
"Everything all the Time"
Label: Sub Pop
Release: March 21



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Campus

MythBusters

Jamie Hyneman and Adam Savage will discuss their show at 8 tonight at Pershing Arena. Tickets are on sale in the Student Activities Board box office. The event is free for students with identification, \$5 for general admission.

Local

Heart Walk

The American Heart Walk Hike/Bike Trail will be from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the Kirksville R-III School. Proceeds benefit cardiovascular and stroke research in the area.

Concerts

Squirrel Fest

Texas Flood Blues Trio, Dance Commanders, Esisenbraun and the Geiger Counter Please Please Please, When Starlight Falls, Aquatic ... and In Memory Of will perform at 1 p.m. Saturday in the Dobson Hall Courtyard.