

ALBUM REVIEW

Shy Kids

House Cats

Shy Kids, a three-piece collective out of Toronto, began as a band, but has evolved into a small but successful production company. With directing, animation, and graphics work in films such as *Nerve*, *Blackberry*, *Therapy Dogs*, and more, they established themselves as a creative force to be reckoned with long before the release of their third studio album, House Cats, released in 2023.

TRACKLIST:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. fresh off a feeling | |
| 2. house cats | 7. the wind |
| 3. photo op | 8. motion of the moon |
| 4. tired | 9. bye bye birdie |
| 5. family name | 10. laugh... only after |
| 6. lovin you (baby) | 11. two days in paradise |



PHOTO COURTESY OF BANDCAMP



HOUSE CATS ALBUM COVER, COURTESY OF SPOTIFY

GENRE: INDIE POP

“fresh off a feeling” opens strong and ethereal with distorting synths and light guitar. The track builds as the lyrics echo the singer’s despair. The chorus hits like a bright beam of sunlight through a sky of clouds as the instrumentals take off and the backing vocals chime in for support. “house cats” begins with a thrumming heartbeat, and a steady pace that keeps me grounded as I drifted through flickering background accents and vocal riffs. The claustrophobia created in the verses is contrasted strongly by the choruses, which arrive with a breath of fresh air and soaring guitar. “photo op” soars above the clouds with soprano vocals and pulsing synths. Soothing and drawing strings carry me through the bridge and into the explosive chorus. “tired” pairs groovy and drumming instrumentals with lyrics that convey, well, tiredness. The conveyed frustration and exhaustion against the ensaring melody creates a track both catchy and easily accessible. “family name” lowers my defenses with soft string strokes before punching hard with synthesized beats. The vocals sit further back, layered and dreamy, and leak through the instrumentals like a memory.

Walter Woodman, Patrick Cederberg, and Matthew Hornick make up the indie band and filmmaking collective known as Shy Kids. They’ve work in short film, film, TV, animation, and music. With 31.9 thousand listeners on Spotify and 9.5 thousand followers on Instagram, they certainly have room to grow, but have already made their stake on the creative world, and have recieved awards such as the Prism Prize, as well as Emmy and Oscar nominations.

“fresh off a feeling
I mean it, I need it
the time to be here
release it, release it
if I can’t concieve it
I crumble, I crumble”
- fresh off a feeling

Want to see more of
their mulltimedia work?
Check out their GFX reel!

“lovin you (baby)” hits back with vocals that sit right in the centre of my ear. The bridge grows into something psychedelic and disarming, and I can’t help but be swept away as the electric guitar kicks in. “the wind” serves as a perfect halfway point in the album, carrying me away with well-placed piano and far-away drums. The musical interlude borders on classical and displays the musical range of the band, as well as acting as a palate cleanser for the second half. “motion of the moon” depicts an argument between two lovers and carries over the classical, jazzy sound from the track before. It cascades and soars through the highs and lows, and violin whines and climbs in response.

Dreamy and floating, the album feels like looking into a sunset. Despite incorporating mainly electronic instrumentals, the album feels like living among nature, laying in a flying, brushing past pine needles as I explore a forest. Equal parts deeply emotional and sonically soothing. The album, a little more pop and electronic based than I usually stray, was a delightful surprise to listen to.

STANDOUTS:
“motion of the moon,” “two days in paradise,” and “fresh off a feeling”

“If I’m not the one
I never was
I’ll leave with no hard feeling
but it wasn’t fun
not even once
stop staring at the ceiling
don’t make me beg for my
humanity”
•
- two days in paradise

“bye bye birdie” shifts to electronic notes immediately mimicked in guitar and quickly followed by evocative violin that leads me into the dreamy vocals and first verse. The chorus has a hit of punk and heavy drums, eloquently juxtaposed by the grounding and earthy verses. Bird song appears throughout, and the whole song carries the feeling of flying. “laugh... only after” begins with a grooving, smooth baseline, and synth beats that alternate between my ears. The track eases through the concept of aftermath and even surprises with a soothing and groovy saxophone solo. “two days in paradise” incorporates an otherworldly background synth and a steady drumbeat. It serves as a fantastic closing track, with an explosive, immersive chorus and emotional, heartbroken lyrics. The vocals are layered and well placed, and the song carries the theme of the entire album on its back while standing alone perfectly. With the crashing drums and heavy guitar, it is a stellar indie-rock song.