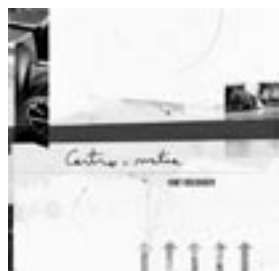




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## Centro-matic Fort Recovery (Misra)

That Denton, Texas-based quartet Centro-matic is one of America's most unsung and all-too-long bubbling-under bands goes without saying. But could now be their time? With the rock world bowing a unison hosanna to Jeff Tweedy and Wilco, and the ascendant rise of heartfelt, slightly abstracted pop acts like the Shins, Death Cab and My Morning Jacket, and askew folk from Sufjan Stevens and Iron and Wine, why now not Centro-matic? This could be the year that Neil Young wises up and gets the band out in front of him warming up for Crazy Horse. Or maybe some big-name producer wises up and realizes that "Love Has Found Me" could be covered by some boringly manicured artist of the moment and dent the Top 40. Barring any of that, however, a listen or 20 to their 10th full-length album, *Fort Recovery*, ought to be enough to demonstrate that there is no better time than now for this band. Beginning as an additional songwriting outlet for singer/guitarist Will Johnson a decade ago, Centro-matic has outgrown their early influences (Guided By Voices, Dinosaur Jr, Flaming Lips) to dwell in a territory all their own, while managing an additional offshoot band—the dreamtime sprawl sounds of the magnificent South San Gabriel. Opening *Fort Recovery* with "Covered up in Mines," a previously rare track found only on an obscure Texas music collection, Centro launches into some emotionally drenched space "from the roadways to the drunk tank," where sliding guitar lines, stretched feedback and sparse drums make way for Johnson's provoking story pallet. In every review like this it is invariably the singer/songwriter who gets pulled into the front and center of the picture. That's who's leading the show. With distorted guitars, warm and fuzzed, matched by a voice exuding the same warmth, the same fuzz, and words pressed in wry, yonder-gazing lyricism, it is hard not to key on Johnson. What makes Centro-matic special, however, is each individual member's power. Bassist Mark Hedman's sprightly touches lock perfectly to drummer Matt Pence's beat, and the pair ably sway from loose and laid-out rhythms to precision timing. Pence is additionally responsible for the crystalline sound on glorious analog tape, recording and engineering at his Echoplex Studios. The linchpin of it all is Scott Danbom, who, like a modern-day Richard Manuel, brings soaring falsetto harmonies, elegantly plinked keys and the occasional violin to make the ultimately resonating final touches on the band's sound. Nowhere is this better displayed than on the utterly perfect construction "Patience for the Ride." The aching "For New Starts" rides away like an indie version of the Allmans, while "Triggers and Trash Heaps" haunts with a beautifully executed chorus. Just when you think Centro-matic has hit their 2006 stride, you better hold your horses: They are planning another album before the year's through. A double vinyl edition of *Fort Recovery* is also available and includes three tracks not on the CD: "Bucketful of Nails," "Not Like Anyone Would Mind" and "Gunmetal and Engines."

—donny kutzbach

*Centro-matic plays the Buffalo Icon, 391 Ellicott St. (842-0167), tonight (April 6) with Great Lakes Swimmers, the Old Sweethearts and Heaven and Hell Cotillion. Doors open at 8pm. \$8 presale, \$10 at the door.*



## Margot and the Nuclear So and So's The Dust of Retreat (Artemis)

You could feel the aftershocks coming along the post-Arcade Fire landscape. The feeding frenzy for labels scouring to find bands mining a sweeping and grandiose "long ago and far away" brand of experimental pop was going to happen, particularly after that Montreal art rock collective refused to sign with a major label. One of the obvious beneficiaries of that search is Margot and the Nuclear So and So's, who have been the early buzz of 2006, with their indie debut reissued by Artemis. The band's implementation of orchestral touches over pop and rock might be nothing new, but the Indianapolis octet manages to move in fresh directions with strong songs and arrangements. It's easy to see why a song like "Vampires in Blue Dresses," a bopping little number that has singer Richard Andrews pining over a backdrop that sounds like a pocket Salvation Army band, would get noticed and earn the band comparisons to Arcade Fire. There's more to Margot than that, though. "Quiet as a Mouse" is anything but, with a surging guitar chorus that spins into sporadic time changes and exquisite cello while the sexy blue verve and slinky, call-response guitar and vibes of "Barfight Revolution, Power Violence" add up to an undeniably atmospheric, funky bit of rock.

—donny kutzbach

*Margot and Nuclear So and So's play with lauded UK pop artistes South plus Something for the Rockets at Showplace Theater, 1063 Grant St. (447-1271), on Sunday (April 9). Doors open at 7pm. \$8.*

## Group Name: The Dustmen

**When/Where playing this week?** Friday April 7, 9pm-1am at the Buffalo Irish Center (245 Abbott Rd.).

Irish Children's Program Benefit Concert on Sunday April 9, 1pm-7pm at Waterstreet Music Hall in Rochester.

## Band members/names/instrument...

Brian Quigley - vocals, acoustic guitar, octave mandolin, tin whistle

Lizzie Scinta - fiddle, guitar, mandolin

Russ Scinta - vocals, banjo, electric & acoustic guitars

Harry Linton - vocals, drums, bodhran



**When did the band form?** A little over two years ago, although we all got to know each other and started playing together earlier than that at Sunday afternoon jam sessions at an Irish pub.

**You might like our music if you like...** Gaelic Storm, the Pogues, the Saw Doctors, Great Big Sea, Spirit of the West, the Wolfe Tones, the Kingston Trio, Tommy Makem.

## List of Recorded Releases

*Rants, Reels, and Other Songs* (2005/McWhorter Records).

New live CD coming this year!

## Upcoming events:

April 21 - Shamrock Jacks in Rochester, 9pm-1am

April 28 - Buffalo Irish Center, 9pm-1am

May 13 - The Union Bar (Pearl Street), 10pm-2 am

May 26 - Buffalo Irish Center, 9pm-1am

June 2 - Shamrock Jacks in Rochester, 9pm-1am

July 29-30 - Lockport Irish Heritage Festival at the Lockport Locks

**Worst show the band ever played:** We played a private gig in Rochester where our fiddler forgot her fiddle bow. After running across half the city to find a bow, we finally got back to the party only to find out that the bar's policy was to refuse to serve alcohol to musicians playing for parties. It was not a good night but we ended up writing a song about this gig called "No Bow, No Beer, No Service" that is on our First CD.

**Best show the band ever played:** The Buffalo Irish Festival 2005 - our first time playing at the fest, the crowd was great, the venue was a great, and we were on fire that day!

**Anything else you would like our readers to know about the band?** We will be recording a live CD this May 26 in the pub of the Buffalo Irish Center. We'd love to pack the place that night! Check our website for more details.

## Contact information:

Brian Quigley (716)316-3959

www.thedustmenband.com.

To respond to this article, e-mail [editorial@artvoice.com](mailto:editorial@artvoice.com) or write to: Artvoice, 810 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14202

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