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**Robert Pollard**  
*From a Compound Eye*  
(Merge)

This is hardly Robert Pollard's solo debut although it has been made to feel like it is. Forget about the half dozen albums and EPs bearing his name—those all saw the light of day while Pollard was leading Dayton, OH's fabled indie stalwarts Guided By Voices. With GBV, Pollard was helming a mini empire. He was the grand poobah of a loose-knit alcohol and guitars outfit that seemed to come from nowhere with little pretension but proved to be one of the most powerful and significant American rock and roll and roll bands of the last twenty years. When Guided By Voices called it quits, following a beer stained eye tour in late 2004, there was little question that Pollard would continue to make music. GBV had always been a shifting aggregate around Pollard's fading captain figure. The stakes for *From a Compound Eye* are high, however, as burying the Guided By Voices moniker signifies a new era. Fans of GBV's brand of bedsit-psychedelia, slapdash-rock and punk-prog need fear not: *From A Compound Eye* is a quiltwork of lo-fi musings, vignette-sized rock epics, and sheer abandon collected across a double album's worth of well-tracked everything and the kitchen sink songs. Pollard's ever present fragmented lyrics and faux-English vox figure throughout. The song "Dancing Girls and Dancing Boys" glances luminescent, bouncy pop with a drumbeat nicked by GBV wannabes The Strokes while "The Numbered Head" clocks in over five minutes—a rarity in Pollard's old days—that earmarks GBV's sensibility for shambolic guitar pomp. Elsewhere, Pollard doesn't shy away from his skewered take on introspective balladry—like on the song "Cock Of The Rainbow." *From A Compound Eye* seems to tow the line for those of the opinion that the death of the name "Guided By Voices" is of little significance. In the words of one of Pollard's uber-inspirations: "Meet the new boss/Same as the old boss."

—donny kutzbach



**Bonnie "Prince" Billy**  
*Summer In The Southeast*  
(Sea Note)

**Bonnie "Prince" Billy and Tortoise**  
*The Brave and the Bold*  
(Overcoat Recordings)

While Bonnie "Prince" Billy's—née Will Oldham—music has often been aligned with moods of darkness and despair, his prolific output is indeed dotted with blatant stabs at humor, joy and fun. One doesn't have to look too far beyond his various promotional photos to see that the intentionally enigmatic songwriter doesn't take himself too seriously. Released a few months back, Oldham's first live recording, *Summer In The Southeast*, takes things a bit further. For the first time, maybe ever, Oldham sounds as if he's having actual fun playing these songs of pain and heartbreak. Recorded in various red states during his tour of 2005, *Summer In The Southeast* has the feel of a few friends undergoing a loose and drunken country rock set. Formerly delicate songs, such as "Master And Everyone" and "Death To Everyone," are transformed into harsh numbers that retain their depth and intimacy while ascending to a new sort of power and immediacy. The classic "I See A Darkness," notoriously covered by Johnny Cash a few years before his passing, keeps its hushed tone but comes close to a breathtaking gospel feel. Recalling his brother Ned's band The Anomoanon or even an early-1970s Grateful Dead, *Summer In The Southeast* is a riotous rediscovery of Oldham's past few endeavors and is indeed a real hoot.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said of Oldham's collaboration with post-rock bores Tortoise, *The Brave And The Bold*. Recorded almost a year ago, *The Brave And The Bold* is a collection of cover songs ranging from Bruce Springsteen and Elton John to The Minutemen and Lungfish. The choice of covers are intriguing enough but the execution is disappointing. Most of the songs are rearranged past the point of recognition so that all that remains identifiable is the lyrics. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, and many of the reconstructions are interesting, but the studio manipulations on Oldham's voice and the overuse of electronica-based beats and rhythms cause much harm to the material. Songs such as Springsteen's "Thunder Road" or Lungfish's fiery "Love Is Love" truly would have shone much brighter in a more gentle and sparse setting. Unfortunately, this sounds like a standard Tortoise record with Oldham guesting; off-based noodling with a singer rambling over it. It's unfair to a criticize an artist for taking chances and for refusing to sit in the box that his or her audience has created for them but *The Brave And The Bold* is an experiment gone almost totally wrong.

—bill nehill



**Group Name:** The Todd Eberwine Band

**When/Where playing this week?**

ARTVOICE Mardi Gras Party, Tuesday, Feb 28 at 5pm at Mr. Goodbar.

**Band Members Names/instrument...**

Todd Eberwine - Guitar/Vocals

Bill Siegler - Bass Guitar

Jeff Hy - Drums

Tom Scime - Piano/B3

**When did the band form?**

The band started in the summer of 2000.

**You might like our music if you like...**

Rock with a blues twinge: Jimi Hendrix, Gov't Mule, Derek Trucks, Stevie Ray Vaughan.

**List of Recorded Releases**

*Revival* - 2001

*Live at The Evening Star* - 2005

*Coming Through in Waves* - due out June 2006

## Upcoming events:

For the next few weeks we will be in the studio mixing the last tracks to our upcoming record and playing some gigs here and there.

Saturday, March 4 at Hickory Hill in Clarence Center is our next scheduled gig. We will also be playing the "Beat Fest" with Jonny James in June.

## Worst show the band ever played:

It was on the Revival tour in 2001. We pulled into Humble, Texas tired, starving and in need of a shower. I don't know what it was but that night nothing went right. The crowd was thin, the PA was having problems and I must have snapped 18 strings. At the time I was touring with six guitars and I went through them all that night.

## Best show the band ever played:

This is a toss up between opening for Doyle Bramhall and a recent show from just last week. We played Mr. Goodbar last Friday and they asked us to cut the night short because there were too many people in the bar and they needed to start filing them out the door. That was a first!

## Anything else you would like our readers to know about the band?

We often get labeled as a straight ahead blues band but we try our hardest to not be known as just that. Anyone that's been to a show or has heard our albums knows that we stray off the beaten path of blues on a regular basis. There's a lot of rock influence in there, hardly any of our original music could be called "blues," it just so happens we play with a bluesy feel.

## Contact information:

www.teband.com