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The Handsome Family *Last Days of Wonder* CD

Carrot Top Records Cat. No. saki040

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Press words on *Singing Bones*:

Such a consistently brilliant work that you may wonder what you've been doing with your life before hearing them.--*Paste*

They have operated on the far edges of weirdness for so long, they make it sound like they're right at home.--Bob Strauss, *LA Daily News*

A formidable, spooky album you can lose--or perhaps find--yourself in.--*Magnet*

Dark, elemental, mischievous and mournful.--*MOJO*

Press words on *Twilight*:

It all feels right, clear, heroic, simple, everyday.--Greil Marcus

Album Of The Month. --*Uncut*

The hymnlike radiance of their melodies, the unwavering steadiness of their tempos and the exotic meld of their instruments conjure a planet of horrible beauty: the very one we all share, whether we know it or not.--*Chicago Tribune*

A-Minus.--Robert Christgau

Last Days of Wonder is a collection of love songs sung in airports, garbage dumps, drive-thru windows and shark-infested waters. The album celebrates the little miraculous moments of beauty found in everyday life: a golf course shining in the rain, hanging lights bouncing in the breeze, pigeons singing from billboards, trees blooming in squares of dirt. The songs linger on those moments when we're pulled from the ordinary to feel awed by mystery, bewildered by beauty, terrified by the vast unknowable around us (whether we wander through shady groves or crowded parking lots).

Brett Sparks, who writes the music, draws from medieval melody, country-politan string arrangements, tin-pan alley crooners, and dusty hillbilly records to weave together the fabric of this record. Rennie Sparks, who writes the lyrics, makes magical realism from polar adventure stories, turn-of-the-century electricity wars, pagan hunting songs and her own time spent (like most people) riding up elevators, staring out hotel room windows, and driving interstate highways.

The inspiration for the words in these songs (and especially the song "Tesla's Hotel Room") comes from Rennie's belief that not only does our present world feel like the last days of wonder, but that human life has always felt just this way: full of a sense of impending doom and inevitable self-destruction, but simultaneously steeped in the sacred, the infinite, the impenetrable, the ever-wondrous.

Brett's musical compositions for the new record and his recording process were hybrids of the old and the new; the real and the fake; the analog and the digital. He drew inspiration from reading *The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions*, which led to many experiments, like recording a kick drum using an old woofer (reverse-wired to a mic cable) as a deep bass mic. *Last Days of Wonder* is full of such anomalies: analog compressors, vintage instruments and condenser mics, all drawn into the digital world. The virtual band created for this record got even weirder when pedal steel parts were e-mailed in from Chicago (**Stephen Dorocke-Freakwater, Jesse Sykes**) and the musical saw part was e-mailed in from London (**David Coulter-Test Dept., Pogues, Tom Waits**). Ah technology...

Last Days of Wonder travels from swamps and caves to laboratories and bowling alleys, always celebrating the mystery and madness in love. The songs explain who's hanging shoes on telephone wires, why automatic sinks in airports sometimes don't see your hands, and why The Handsome Family refuses to go to Heaven unless flies can come too. Also, a tender tale of Tesla's last days: his love for wounded pigeons and his ability to explode light bulbs with his mind. Rennie is eaten by a wild boar. Brett threatens to pull the stars down from the sky. It's a record of love songs in the true Romantic sense.