

MODERN SKIRTS
ALL OF US IN OUR NIGHT

Ordinary music tends to get classified by genre. Some of this stuff is quite exciting, really. It does what you expect it to, but it follows the formula well enough that its derivative nature doesn't matter. We call it indie, or pop, or modern rock, and we recommend it to listeners who enjoy those styles. But every now and then, a band reminds us that when the songs are good enough, and innovative enough, genre is the last thing that matters. You don't need to be a music major to recognize that the twelve tracks on Modern Skirts' sophomore album, *All Of Us In Our Night*, are unusually constructed. They have unexpected twists and turns, chords that startle with their novelty, and melodies that feel refreshingly original. And you don't need to be an aficionado to get excited by such infectious choruses – they'll get stuck in the heads of neophyte listeners and super-hipsters alike. So call it "pop", call it "rock", call it "indie", call it "classic" if you must. Better yet, call it what it is- a collection of fantastic, irresistible, entirely unclassifiable songs.

It's been an inexorable rise to prominence for the Athens quartet, and one that will only be accelerated by the release of *All Of Us In Our Night*. Since the group formed five years ago, Modern Skirts have sold out shows at the legendary 40 Watt Club and are regulars at Chapel Hill's Cat's Cradle and NYC's Mercury Lounge. This past summer, they traveled to the UK for a second time on a successful two week tour, first appearing at the Glastonbury Festival before crossing the channel to open for R.E.M. in Amsterdam and joining them in Belgium alongside Vampire Weekend and The National at Rock Werchter. They followed these shows with a performance on the MTV Stage at the 02 Wireless Festival in London. Furthermore, they landed their debut album on *PASTE's* Best of 2005 list, placed a track on a *Q Magazine* radio sampler, performed on the *Mountain Stage* radio program, and showcased at the *In The City* music festival in Manchester, England. *Catalogue Of Generous Men*, their debut, remains one of the best-loved underground records from the Athens scene in years, and the video for their song "Pasadena", directed by New Slang Films, received airtime on 40 different networks.

Music fans all over the world are learning who this band is and are loving what they're hearing. So are industry insiders and some world-famous friends. Mike Mills of R.E.M. produced a track on *All Of Us In Our Night* (the insanely catchy "Motorcade"). David Lowery of Camper Van Beethoven and Cracker produced another five. Nevertheless, as the group proves on the six cuts they produced themselves, these songs are so good that it's hard to imagine Modern Skirts' sophomore offering being anything but a success. Lead singer and principle songwriter Jay Gulley's knack for crafting an undeniably catchy melody keeps our ears glued to *All Of Us In Our Night* from beginning to end. Many cuts are built around vintage keyboards and surprising progressions- the gorgeous opener "Chanel", for instance, and the radiant "Radio Breaks", which concludes with a chorus of muted horns. Phillip Brantley's rhythm guitar pushes along the punchier tracks- the marvelously Beatlesque "Astronauts" and the Badfinger-dazzling "Soft Pedals". Pianist JoJo Glidewell bounces and struts through these twelve songs, illuminating their corners, burying dark layers of chords under the aching "Mrs." and sprinkling electric piano over the top of "Yugo". Long days spent on the road have turned the band's rhythm section (anchored by drummer John Swint) into an unstoppable unit, capable of imparting sensitivity to the heady "Soft Pedals", then turning on a dime to storm through the rollicking "Eveready". And in keeping with Modern Skirts' classic models, everybody sings, and the harmony-vocal arrangements are sophisticated, sweet, and effortlessly discharged.

Some might say we've come up with our own homegrown version of Sloan: another band of accomplished musicians who know their rock history intimately and have a similar knack for matching hooky verses with dazzling choruses.

But that wouldn't do justice to the band's offbeat diction and endlessly intriguing lyrics. We'll put it this way: you won't always know exactly what's happening in a Modern Skirts song, but you'll always be curious, and surprised, at where they're going next.

-courtesy of HIP PROMO

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