

Pool Boys Bio: 2023

All-Femme Portland Indie Rock - Loud Guitars & Pretty Harmonies

RIYL: St. Vincent, The Zombies, The Cure, The Breeders

A reductionist view of Pool Boys' music could claim four words: Loud guitars; pretty harmonies. Songwriters Emma Browne and Caroline Jackson weave their varied pedigrees together to form a unique sound in Portland music. Pool Boys thrive in dualities - they live in the space where soft and sensitive gives way to grit and ire. Browne's melodic guitar hooks and oft-spacey, oft-grungy textures are thoroughly supported by Jackson's weaving bass lines and all four member's strong voices. The four piece feels equally at home with intricate art-pop outfits or with DIY punk bands.

In the past year, Pool Boys has been named one of Willamette Week's Best New Bands, was featured as the opening track of PDX Pop Now's local compilation, shared stages with Jerry Paper, Tonstartssbandht, and Vinyl Williams, and has been featured on KOIN 6 AM Extra News Show. They will soon perform with Camas High School's choir program as the featured performers as well as release a music video for the song Feathers off of their debut EP, *Obviously, Doctor* at a headlining show at the Doug Fir in February 2023.

Feathers is simultaneously a very dark and stubbornly hopeful song. It touches on the self-destruction-as-revenge feeling that can arise when wronged by someone you love deeply. That power that only a few people in life hold over you, but that's hard to escape from when you're writhing in it. The video, directed by Hanna Hagen and shot by Sean Conley, features both parts of yourself - the downtrodden and the savior. The powerless and the powerful - coming to pull yourself out of grief.

Obviously, Doctor is the debut four-song EP from the one year old band. The EP showcases an excellent cross-section of the diversity among songs that makes this band shine. The meandering guitar lines and unexpected chord structures of Jackson's "Nothing But Trouble" are reminiscent of The Cure, while the raw emotion, rich harmonies, and atypical time signatures in Browne's "Cellophane" and "44 Stone Lions," call to mind The Zombies and The Cranberries. The EP, which was recorded at Flora Recording and Playback, takes the listener on a journey. Producer Justin Chase's (Pure Bathing Culture) clean touch especially shines on "Feathers," which takes its place as the emotive ballad on the album, evocative of Portishead, while simultaneously showing off each of the members' unparalleled voices. Browne's syrupy whisper softly yearns for deliverance while Dillon, Jackson, and founding drummer Alex Radakovich play her winged guardians.

While it touches on many subjects, the EP has an underlying current of feminism and equality. Born during the Trump era, the band has found creative solace with a group of all females. This extended even further in the recording of "44 Stone Lions," which features a choir of eight

additional Portland musicians (including Lily Breshears [Haley Heynderickx band, Sheers], Lisa Adams [Sama Dams], Laura Hopkins [Black Water Holy Light, Laura Palmer's Death Parade], Dasha Shleyeva [Radiation City]) who sing in powerful unison "we'll never be lonely."

The EP title "Obviously, Doctor" stems from the Sofia Coppola film *The Virgin Suicides*. In a memorable scene, the youngest of the sisters asserts the overwhelming complexities of adolescent emotions to her psychiatrist: "Obviously, Doctor, you've never been a thirteen year old girl."

Pool Boys is the thesis project of Portland music veterans Browne and Jackson, and their arrival as songwriters and performers is heavily apparent. Their live performance, with singer-guitarist Annie Dillon and drummer Monica Metzler, has become a sight to behold; they outfit themselves with blue of all shades and laugh together on stage like four pre-teens at a sleepover. Their passion is infectious to their audiences, who can often be seen singing along even the first time they've heard the songs.