

# the SLATS Pick It Up CDX15

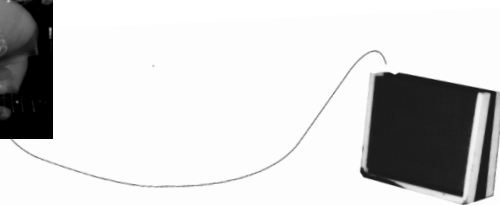
**PICK IT UP** is the latest and greatest release from the emerging art-punk savants, the Slats. The energetic trio has been building momentum since it started touring the US in support of its critically acclaimed 2002 album, **THE GREAT PLAINS OF SAN FRANCISCO** (Tyros Label). Having graduated from home-recordings to the studio, the band's experimental indie-rock hasn't been stripped of any of its skronk. Rather, the Slats have boisterously made the studio their new home, and **PICK IT UP** (Latest Flame Records) is destined to launch these underground up-and-comers onto the national scene.

Original Slat **Brian Cox** (Vocals, guitar) has clearly found his song writing team with more recent Slat additions **Jon Hansen** (guitar, vocals) and **Mark Tietjen** (drums). The band is divided by distance with members in Minneapolis, MN and Iowa City, IA but the song writing process hasn't suffered. Instead, the result is a cache of songs, rich in pop sensibility, that turn on a dime into unexpected directions just when you think you have them figured out. Then, they trim off the fat, turn up the volume, and start throwing ideas at you as fast as you can take them. This happens within single songs, such as "Teena", an irresistible pop song that drives ahead as melodically as any radio-hit by the cars...until the quirky guitar solo comes in like a burst of Sonic Youth noise. This juxtaposition of sweet and sour can be heard from song to song, as well. From the downright danceable "Physical Reaction" to the disturbingly anarchic "Mouth Like a Shogun", this album plays like an eclectic mix-tape that goes from The Beatles to Black Flag in the space of 3 minutes.

But the most consistent element of this album is the intelligence and intrigue of the lyrics. The imagistic wordplay of both Cox and Hansen can be as provocative as early Elvis Costello, especially in songs like "The War I Survived" and "I Believe Timothy McVeigh", though the stream-of-consciousness flow of words resists overtly political interpretation. In "The Diabetic Coma", Hansen rants manically about hypoglycemic depression: "I'm as serious as a maladaptive pancreas/ you need a need a needle to regulate this." Even when addressing tried and true rock 'n' roll subject matter (e.g. relationships, cars, revenge...) the Slats don't rehash tired metaphors or trite positions. In "Teena", Cox exhorts the ostensible object of his desire to "put your head down on my shoulder/ I'm just a saber-toothed cobra."

Like any good rock band, the Slats should be seen live, where their manic stage presence brings the schizophrenic nature of these songs to life. The Slats will be leaving their homes in Minneapolis, MN and Iowa City, IA to be on tour over the next year, making more fans with each set of songs they tear through.

**FOR FANS OF:** WIRE, ENON, GUIDED BY VOICES, LE TIGRE



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