

# LEFT *of the* DIAL

# bandwidth



**The Raconteurs**  
*Broken Boy Soldiers*  
(V2)

Oh man, it would have been so sweet if Jack White had finally lost his Midas touch. I'm sure that I'm not the only one who has hoping for the chance to slam the red-and-white-clad tunesmith on his new splinter group outing. After all, the White Stripes leader has had a much better than normal track record with his main group and in his capacity as a musical facilitator. In the past half decade or so, White has been credited for reviving the career of a country music icon (Loretta Lynn), bringing new life into a preferred musical genre (garage rock) and helping to bring attention to plenty of other formerly obscure artists (both old and new). Hell, White's touch is so powerful that all he has to do is beat the crap out of someone to make them (if only briefly) famous (Von Bondies, it was nice while it lasted). Of course, the Raconteurs isn't just about Jack White—but it's his throat that we'd all be gunning for if the record sucked. Thankfully, *Broken Boy Soldiers* doesn't suck. On the contrary, for an album with such a decidedly spontaneous and fun biography—the group was formed by White and pop tunesmith supreme Brendan Benson after a songwriting session that produced the anthemic “Steady As She Goes”—*Broken Boy Soldiers* sounds awfully well considered. Perhaps this consideration is owed to the tastefully chosen sum of the group's parts. Drummer Patrick Keeler and bassist Jack Lawrence, well known to rock fans as the rhythm section for critical darlings the Greenhornes, previously worked with White and Benson on Loretta Lynn's *Van Lear Rose*. The Raconteurs seem to arrive ready-made as a solidly functioning unit and eschew the usual pratfalls of many super-groups who coast through their studio sessions on ego alone. The songs on *Broken Boy Soldiers* run the gamut from 1960s-inspired pop (“Yellow Sun”) to riff-heavy rave-ups (“Hands” and the title track) and old school R&B ballads (“Blue Veins”). And though the album clocks in at just 30 minutes, it's pretty clear that we're going to have to wait a lot longer if we want to give Jack White a reasonable public tongue-lashing. Maybe next year he'll discover calypso or something.

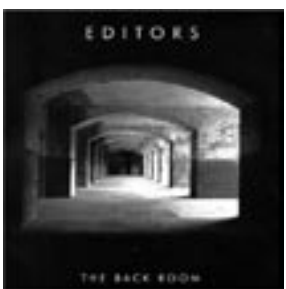
—mark norris



**Band of Horses**  
*Everything All the Time*  
(Sub Pop)

The first impression isn't always right. Mine: Are Jim James and My Morning Jacket going to sue these guys or what? Band of Horses initially seemed a straight ripoff of the Jacket's reverb-drenched, back-porch, widescreen sound. Like most good things, however, I found that the more I got to know it, the more I saw its uniqueness. Additionally, here's a case of wait and ultimately find reward. Band of Horses' pedigree traces to the Seattle of the mid 1990s, but not from the typical grouping of flannel and flange guitar bands. Ben Bridwell and Matt Brooke were at the core of Carrisa's Weird, a feted folk-pop group with a purposely misspelled name. That band's demise led to what would become Band of Horses. The more I let singer/guitarist Ben Bridwell's dreamy pastoral anthems seep in, the more *Everything All the Time* proved its splendorous power. *Everything* bears the timeless rock earmarks of warm reverb, with the feel of a richly detailed hymnal that captures life gone awry (“Great Salt Lake”), wistful sincerity (“The Funeral”) and half-dreamt recollections (“St. Augustine”). The playing here is laid-back, understated and note-perfect, while Bridwell's voice carries across these songs, from the twangy whispers of “I Go to the Barn Because” to the blissful rock of “Weed Party,” like a boundless ocean.

—donny kutzbach



**Editors**  
*The Back Room*  
(Fader)

Pity the hipster on a budget, trying to keep up with every Next Big Thing that crosses the Atlantic. The UK hype factory continues to crank out It-band after It-band of modern post-punk, at a pace that doesn't leave much cash at the end of the month for smoking jackets and ironic t-shirts. Now here comes the stateside debut of Editors, a Birmingham quartet which owes as much debt of influence to Interpol as it does to Joy Division. You loved Silent Alarm and Arctic Monkeys as much as the next guy, but your wallet thinks this 1980s art-rock renaissance is getting out of hand. Should you: (a) divert part of your latte fund; (b) hit up your cooler friends who got the import last summer; or (c) just play *Turn on the Bright Lights* another 500 times and congratulate yourself for buying American? Since Artvoice does not condone the unauthorized copying of recorded music (ahem), the correct answer is (a). *The Back Room* is sharp and stylish, with an ominous tone that should make Ian McCulloch weep like a brand-new daddy. Tracks like “Munich,” “Blood” and “Bullets” surge with an intensity that sustains even when the tempo slows down, as on the lush “Open Your Arms.” *The Back Room* is neither perfect nor necessary, but—with apologies to your wallet—it is pretty damn good.

—jennifer behrens

**Group Name:** Steve Roth/Meredith Brown—but we're starting to use the name Thread for different shows.

**When/Where playing this week?** This week we're playing the coffeehouse at Faith Wesleyan Church, (4600 Union Rd., Cheektowaga) Friday, April 21 at 8pm, and Pizza Plant, Main St., Williamsville (in the Walker Center) Saturday, April 22 at 7:30pm.

**Band members/names/instrument...**

Steve Roth - acoustic guitars, vocals/harmonies, percussion  
Meredith Brown - acoustic guitars, vocals/harmonies, percussion.

**When did the band form?** Sometime in the Spring of 2004. I had been doing the solo, singer/songwriter thing for a few years prior. Meredith started coming to an open mic I was running and we hit it off, having a lot of the same musical interests and goals. We started out as basically two independent singer/songwriters backing each other up. Now it's apparent we've grown into a “band,” and it's a blast to bounce things off each other and have those extra layers to the music.



**You might like our music if you like...** Acoustic, indie rock with elements of folk, alt-country/Americana, tight, rich harmonies, and a “neo bohemian” vibe. Kind of along the lines of Indigo Girls, with pieces of Tom Petty, Sheryl Crow, Counting Crows, Jennifer Knapp and Joan Osborn thrown in; we're fans of the “unplugged” rock genre.

**List of Recorded Releases**

Steve Roth - *Beautiful Addiction*. Meredith came along toward the tail-end of production on the CD but was able to fit in on couple of the tracks. We're currently working on a demo of new material for late spring/early summer that will feature songs written by us both, and even an obscure cover or two.

**Upcoming events:**

Buffalo Folk Rock Freakout with Chris Squier and Dee Adams Wed., May 3rd at Nietzsche's; *Cinco de Mayo*, May 5th at Coyote Cafe in Hamburg; Clarence Center Coffee Company May 6th; the grand opening for Seattle's Best Coffee at Borders, Walden Ave., Cheektowaga on June 17th.

**Worst show the band ever played:** About a year ago we went to do a few songs and audition for a gig at a local open mic run by a blues band. Before we even took the stage, the host told us that if people start leaving he'd pull us off. They put our acoustic guitar through an amp set up for an electric and refused to make any adjustments. They kept my vocals in the monitors and panned Meredith's hard right in the mains. It was obvious they weren't interested in us before we even opened our mouths. (Some time later the venue went down and changed ownership, which made us feel somewhat vindicated).

**Best show the band ever played:** Earlier this year we were one of the featured bands at Music Is Art Live @ the Center at UB (to be shown this fall on WNLO 23). Just a great vibe and atmosphere with a totally pro crew. It's a lot more fun when there's positive energy to feed off of.

**Anything else you would like our readers to know about the band?** You can catch the track, “Beautiful Addiction,” in regular rotation on 107.7 FM *the Lake*, other tracks on 97 Rock's *Homegrown Show*, and the occasional bump on the *Tom Bauerle Show* on WBEN 930AM (feel free to email or call the stations to request us)...In addition to playing conventional venues, we're starting to schedule house concerts, which is nice and intimate and a lot of fun (just email us if you'd like more info)...*Beautiful Addiction* is available at our shows, Borders Books and Music on Walden Ave., Cheektowaga, and at [www.CDBaby.com](http://www.CDBaby.com). And while we love having our friends and favorite hang-outs close by, we're making plans to move to Nashville later this year as we try and figure out how to make music a full-time gig.

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