



SHUYLER JANSEN - THE LONG SHADOW

Well, yes, of course, *The Long Shadow*. The new Shuyler Jansen record couldn't, shouldn't, have been called anything else, considering. It's a record of low suns and dying daylight, a record haunted by the looming spectres of old friends, jobs, loves, towns, vices, grudges.

It's a goodbye to the Prairies, in a sense, given Shuyler's new-ish North Van address and the quarter-century of bands, solo records and collaborations in the rearview back in Edmonton (*Naked and the Dead*, *Old Reliable*) and Saskatoon (*Deep Dark Woods*, *Foam Lake*).

And a nod, probably, to the genre-bending range of influences that informs and shapes his art. That mix suggested itself a decade ago on *Hobotron* and it emerges again here, wondrous and exhaustive, an updated and sprawling *American Stars 'n' Bars*, each record repeatedly surprising over their respective nine songs.

Shuyler grew up in Alberta's capital, where 1990s clubs and contemporaries proved it was, in fact, perfectly sensible to layer Ralph Stanley and John Cale and Willie on top of The Cure on top of Dinosaur Jr. *The Long Shadow* echoes that, and more.

A particular swath might reveal pedal steel from Nashville, synths from Frankfurt, and drums from the (Keith John) Moon. Other whole songs (*We Should Just Fall*) radiate orchestral gloom, the mix conjured by some northern Brian Wilson, if he grew up shod in shitkickers and scanning green skies for funnel clouds instead of hanging ten and kicking off flip-flops on sunny Manhattan Beach.

"I never cared for easy money," Shuyler sings, through the swirl. Well, no kidding.

Treasure Trove was written as a goddamn waltz, but here it sounds like a range-riding Kyuss, heavy and roaring through the blasting sand. Shuyler promises to stretch these songs out live, and it's easy to imagine this one going 10-minutes-plus, exploding with *My Bloody Valentine*-level volume and ruminations on a single squalling chord.

Old Machine is the hit, in an equitable universe that would allow such a thing, a sing-along set-closer for cowboy Dads with hurt in their hearts and ancient synths stacked in the garage by waveform and/or manufacturer.

Then We Were So Young drops, a fully-formed outtake from #1 Record, Alex and Chris together again, blissed out and everything between them forgiven, *Big Star* and banjo cycling in their proper orbits.

All of it was captured (production: JCDC's David Carswell) in a 1940s lakefront cabin near the Saskatchewan town of Wakaw, a perfect little palindrome for the obsessive compulsives among us who shun sidewalk cracks and count syllables in our heads.

It was a creative cauldron for Shuyler's studio band, even as the mid-winter sun plunged every mid-afternoon and the boys got itchy. Mike Silverman (drums, percussion) set up in one room, Paul Rigby (guitars, pedal steel, mandolin) took one bedroom, Chris Mason (bass guitar, bg vox) took another, and Shuyler hunkered down in the kitchen, presiding over various instruments, vocals, and his Internet-famous crock-pot meals.

"You can hear the warmth from the wood panelling, that shitty carpet in the drums. And I think you can hear us coming together. We were unified by default," Shuyler says.

The result might be for everyone, given the range, the poetry. We're all followed by long shadows.

Shuyler knows it's probably not for everyone.

"Whether it's one copy or five million, I want every copy to go to someone who really wants it," he says.

Written by Shawn Ohler

Angie Jansen for BWC Publicity bwcpublicity@gmail.com 604-396-1556

**BIG
WHITE
CLOUD**
bigwhitecloudrecs.com
RECORDS
BIGWHITECLOUDRECS.COM
(604) 396-1374
BIGWHITECLOUDRECS@GMAIL.COM