

BARS OF GOLD - EVR Records ~ SHELTERS

It's not that Bars of Gold are defiant; it's that they're fortifying... Cuz when a record label suggested this Detroit-based quintet cut one of their three guitar players, they went ahead and invited another friend to join the band—another guitarist! That may be because the virtue of a “family” is what's at the forefront of their collective brain, rather than “streamlining” their “band” to make it in the “industry.” Why take anything away, when you can bolster? That's Bars of Gold!

For first timers pressing “play,” it's about impossible not to be swept up in the the tidal forcefulness of the six-piece's gutsy, guitar-heavy new songs on *SHELTERS*. Their third album is a composite of various intensities: an ambient post-rock record with torrential rhythms, a folk-metal foray with extremely keen sensibilities for dynamics, it's math rock for the pub, it's CBGB's if CBGB's were on the shore of a Great Lake, and it's also probably effectively evocative if you were to set it as a soundtrack to footage of mountain bike stunts, parkour, or skateboard rail shreds. Try to dance to it and you twist an ankle, try to sing along with it and you might go hoarse, but if you do anything, just let the guitars, all four of them, wash over you in a gracefully interwoven sonic ballet of melodic distortion and taut, reverb-soaked riffs.

But back to “fortifying.” The friendships of Bars of Gold were forged nearly 25 years ago, back to their days growing up as music-loving pre-teens in a blue collar community, Highland, MI, just 30 minutes west of Detroit. John Gaviglio is the newest member, joining BoG in year nine of their 10-year run (he's the aforementioned fourth guitar), but his friendship with singer/guitarist Marc Paffi and drummer Brandon Moss stretches far back, and was on display, be it on stages or aurally through two albums from the early 2000s, in the post-hardcore group **Bear Vs. Shark**. The frenetic DNA of that band inevitably seeped into a separate project (also sprung from Highland) started in 2006 by guitarists Ben Audette and Scotty Iulianelli, with bassist Nick Jones. Having been out of BVS for some time by that point, Moss, a couple years elder this new trio, would percussively round out their group, called **Wildcatting**.

Then in 2009, after three years and one characteristically furious album, Wildcatting would welcome Paffi to the fold, initiating a new evolutionary phase in their musical journey, re-emerging as **Bars of Gold**. Essentially, Wildcatting morphed from being a voluminously trancey instrumental jam band, to a more aerodynamic, more versatile rock outfit that could weave an infectious groove as well as erupt with invigorating choruses. With Paffi now lending his signature roar~croon~roar and his Westerberg-meets-Bukowski style of poetic lyrics, the BoG quintet got to work on their debut, releasing *Of Gold* in late summer of 2010. It's a strong first statement, and very exploratory, in terms of vibe and energy, from song to song. They followed with an even tighter, but also even more experimental album, *Wheels* in 2013.

But a lot of transition happens in six years. In fact, they had to transition, rather woefully, from utilizing Iulianelli's basement studio space as their HQ when a 2014 summer superstorm sluiced in more than a foot of water. They found renewed energy when they secured a new space that winter, renovating and outfitting it themselves, and christening it “The Brain,” (the place where, naturally, their ideas happen). A handful of songs on *SHELTERS* were written *while* they were moving in and setting up said “Brain,” with a handful more following soon after. Feeling reenergized, they were able to bring to new life a few song ideas that were nearly 10 years old at this point.

But then they got that suggestion to pare down the band by one member... After six years of the of grounding enlightenment that came with four of them becoming fathers, cultivating the stability of family, work, friendship, and now their new brick-and-mortar rehearsal space, they couldn't reckon all that existential fortifying with the idea of a taking away, of any kind, from what has proven to be an ever-strengthening foundation. And we know you've heard a lot of adages about “friendship,” but Bars of Gold transcend all those. This is musical telepathy in action, executed by a six-man crew (with four guitars) that have never forgotten why they're together.

“Sometimes we're writing a song and think, okay, this is where a horn part would go...but it always ends up being more guitars,” said Iulianelli. The influence upon their maximal mix of laser-focused onslaughts and acrobatic storms with undeniable grooves comes from groups like Fugazi, MC5 and James Brown. The urgency is undeniably there, said Moss, and that's for a reason. “Becoming a father affirmed how I see the world, and being able to play music with this affirmation makes me appreciate that parenthood is extraordinarily hard, but so is being an artist of any type.

Being a parent isn't just about creating beauty, it's about struggle and surviving."

How much do we need music? Or friends? Is it comparable to the shelter we would seek as a young child might, in the cradle of a parent, a father? The album, in its quietest moments and in its most rousing crescendos, takes inventory of what we can and can't always protect in this life, experimenting to see the ways in which music made between friends enhances the guardianship that's tacit in their bond, and it celebrates, with notable vigor in those aforementioned dynamics, solos, and soul-baring vocals, the way music, even a fitful four minute song, can foreground all those things you value, in a family, and in a friendship. Bars of Gold brought another friend to the table. Their songs, their creative space, their fellowship, their sons and daughters, and their guitars, are all further fortified.

Bars of Gold – SHELTERS

- 1.) *Worthless Chorus*
- 2.) **Atlantic City**
- 3.) **\$20**
- 4.) **Sometimes**
- 5.) *Beans*
- 6.) *Madonna*
- 7.) *Montana*
- 8.) *Plywood to Pine*
- 9.) *G*

Equal Vision Records Releases SHELTERS in April 12, 2019

<https://www.facebook.com/BARSOFGOLD/>

<http://www.equalvision.com/artists/bars-of-gold/>



****While Paffi is also a painter, that isn't his handywork on the cover. However, it is a painting by his late great uncle, obtained from attic storage.***