

## PRESTON SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY

In 1989, after a mushroom-laden camping trip to the family farm in Montana, Scott Kannberg and a childhood friend record a few songs at Gary Young's studio/garage in Stockton, CA. Scott borrows \$800 from his father and begins pressing up a little record, calling it Slay Tracks. As his friend (mysteriously) disappears with backpack into post-graduation Europe, Scott toils half-heartedly as a clerk/punk-rock-record-buyer at a tiny Stockton record store. The young Kannberg begins to distribute the little record to friends, fanzines and small record labels. He even gives one to his dad. He christens the band Pavement, after a short-lived group he'd started in college, and decides to change his name, at least in print, to Spiral Stairs.

While meandering through Eastern Europe and Western Asia, spending more than his share of Deutschmarks and speaking indecipherable Farsi to unsuspecting natives, the childhood friend discovers an imported version of Slay Tracks at a record shop in Berlin. Meanwhile, back in the States, Spiral and a new drummer/roommate record more tracks for Pavement. Luckily the childhood friend, Slay Tracks in hand, returns to Stockton in time to lend some vocals to the new tracks, resulting in a second 7" for the humble garage band. Spiral and friend title second release Demolition Plot J-7 as Pavement make the transition from one-off fluke to a bona fide "band." As they say, two down, and many more to go...

Flash forward eleven years--after adding three band-mates/ friends and losing one stalwart inspiration, and with five albums and many singles under their belt, a tour that barely misses Tanzania, a few college radio hits and a nice legion of loyal fans firmly intact, Pavement quietly disband in the Summer of 2000. Some say there was strife, some say the split was compelled by boredom. Finally and most reasonably, some simply say it's better to fade away and quit your whining anyway.

Pre/post Pavement-demise Spiral continues writing music and starts Amazing Grease Records with friends, Ben Lutch and Mike Drake (Oranger, Overwhelming Colorfast). Amazing Grease releases records from the likes of Oranger, Carlos, Sunless Day, Cole Marquis, Aaron Nudelman, and the Moore Brothers. Then, after uncovering a four-track player full of tunes written for Pavement's last record, Terror Twilight, and armed with an ankle-deep record collection reflecting his punk-rock and post-rock fanaticism, newly and firmly inspired Spiral steps to the mic. Rising from the dust, flack and emotional debris, Spiral decides that the post-Pavement lore has only just begun. Spiral gets intimate with his acoustic and spends early 2000 recording more melodic fucked-up songs than you could twitch your ear at. He aspires to a hum-under-your-breath and tap-your-toes while bobbing-your-head-incessantly-to-the-music sort of sound and decides he may even use two (instead of Pavement's customary one) takes. He dusts off his Tascam and upgrades his drum-machine with a couple of dried-out coconuts. He decides, "it's time the music in my head met the sound of an electronic beat." Or was at least put to tape. (Yeah.)

Now, and with hardly a metallic flutter, his new project Preston School of Industry is born. PSOI taps into Spiral's enthusiasm for all things Echo and the Bunnymen, Fall, Kinks and Clean--filtered through his Central Valley Americana roots. The results? Spiral puts down over twenty songs and in June 2001 Amazing Grease Records releases a small taste of things to come with Goodbye to the Edge City CDEP and 10" with grand ALBUM to ensue...

PSOI provides Spiral with the perfect environment and--most importantly--his first opportunity to combine his influences into a full-length release of his own. And with its layers that reveal themselves gradually and its penchant to let things lie, sometimes magically and imperfectly, we find All This Sounds Gas one of the most refreshing and original albums we've heard in a long time.

We all know that Spiral's songs in Pavement were the anthems (think "Forklift," "Two States," and "Kennel District"), songs whose hooks and heart made them among the most loved of the Pavement canon. And from the first notes of PSOI's "Whalebones" you'll know you're in that old familiar Pavement territory, surrounded by all your favorite guitar licks that threaten to momentarily fall apart just as they arabesque briefly, almost imperceptively. Spiral steps into uncharted territory by adding fluegelhorns and cello, not to mention actually letting us hear his voice. "Whalebones" (along with "Encyclopedic Knowledge of" and "Idea of Fires"--all pilfered from previously-mentioned pre-Terror Twilight recordings) was recorded in the Summer/ Fall of 2000 at Gary Young's studio--maybe you'll hear it in the drums. The remainder of the songs were written Spring of 2000 after the last Pavement tour (recorded Winter 2000) and, without trying to sell you on every song, we must say that with "Falling Away" Spiral has created another anthem that could've been the Cure's next great video hit (picture a cliff, a pair of floppy New Balances and a tube of Ruby-Red lipstick). The normally taciturn Spiral even delivers a seven-and-a-half minute rock odyssey that tells the tale of Icarus and Daedulus, who flew too close to the sun.

The album's theme, you ask? "California after the rush," we say. Somewhere between the Orange Groves and suburbs, or lying beneath the PCs and Palm Pilots, Spiral questions whether anything (?) is truly lost forever. With "Solitaire" he resuscitates Lou Reed's classic "Kill Your Sons" through 80s dance floor iconography whilst while reviving the spirit of post-hip-hop Prince via Moog. Who would've thought? He closes the album with the Lennon/Lips collision "Take a Stand."

Finally, Preston School of Industry--with Andrew Borger (Tom Waits, Moore Bros.) on drums and Jon Erickson (Moore Bros.) on bass plus various talented and inspired Bay Area musicians--sets fire to all of George's lawn gnomes as Spiral sidesteps all comparisons to previous incarnations to begin building the foundations of a whole new dynasty of his own.