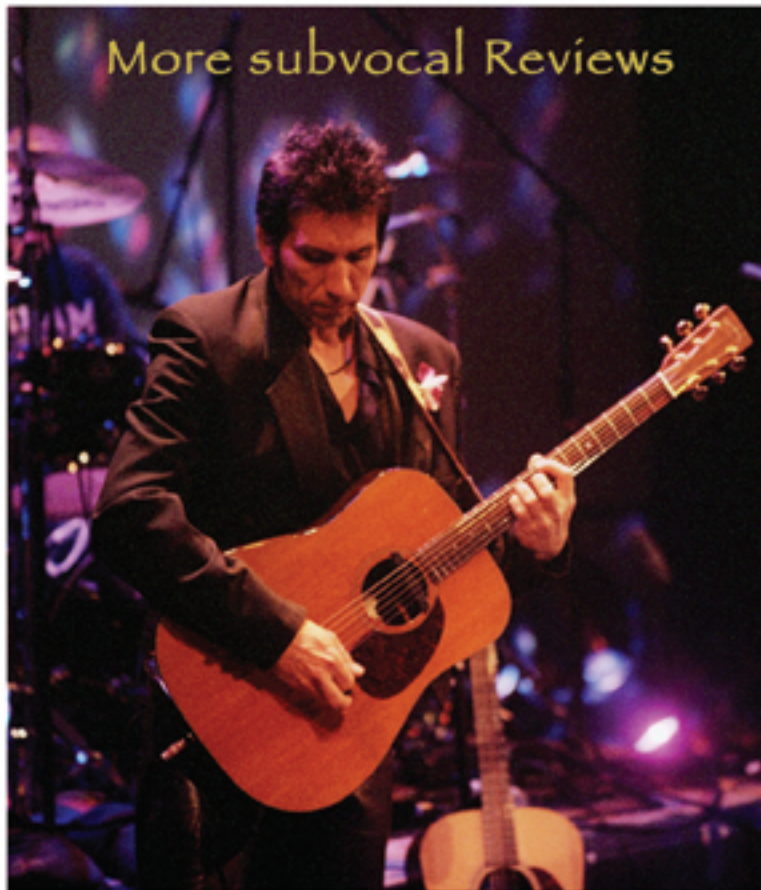


More subvocal Reviews



subvocal / Mark Adkins press

Musicians have a hard time making a good living from their art. In some places, working at the corner copy shop is the preferred day gig for paying off life's necessities. In Madison, driving shifts for Union Cab is a time-honored tradition for players who need rent money along with a chance to perform. For the most part, the tracks on this Union-centric compilation are new, but old-school metallions Model Citizen are also represented by a pair of crunching rockers recorded in the early '90s. One of the most interesting tunes is a product of the aptly named Subvocal, a space-rock-cum-industrial act ramrodded by the CD's producer, Mark Adkins. It's been a while since smart, truly experimental rock bands cut and pasted the anxious recitation of, say, an oddball love letter with woozy, highly processed guitars and undermixed rhythms and created something exciting and special. But that's exactly what Subvocal does on the enjoyably crazed "Heidy's Letter." Other notable offerings include the tongue-in-cheek Goth-metal of Waysyde's "Beer Song," Kurt Stienke's arid electronic groove "Unpleasant Nature" and Ingrid Frances Stark's lilting folk song "Taxi Driver's Lament." Itchin' to tip these music-making drivers in person? You're in luck, a release party for Rearview Visionaries takes place at the Barrymore Theatre on Friday, Oct. 18.

Tom Laskin, Isthmus Magazine, Oct 2003

Barrymore Theater Friday, October 18 th 2003

Not since Spooner's triumphant performance at the same Barrymore theater in 1991 in celebration of the release of "The Fugitive Dance" has Madison witnessed such a fine performance by a local band as this evening's, or should have witnessed. Only 128 ticket holders showed up for the CD release party of "Union Cab Presents: Rearview Visionaries". But the house should have been packed for what went down as one of the finest and most complete performances I've ever seen anywhere. Mark Adkins, guitarist, vocalist and man in charge at Brokenshitstudios, has found his stride with **subvocal**, his dark ethereal, psych-pop trio. Combining the superb lighting effects of Curtis Mitchell and the mesmerizing aerial dance and suspension art of Aeros, it proved to be way more than the sum of it's parts. But having heard **subvocal's** recordings, I knew that the music alone would be enough to transport the audience to another realm. I was not disappointed and neither was anyone in attendance. Amid frequent shouts of beautiful from a female member of the crowd and some good-natured heckling from Mark's many taxi driving friends, **subvocal** absolutely enchanted the stunned audience with beautiful melodies amid a wash of echo and reverb and the sweet sounds from Steve Pingry's cello. At one point Adkins addressed the crowd saying, "welcome to your life". True, and well spoken by a man who's found a way to turn all his fears, frustrations, pains and pleasures into something this creative and innovative. Guitarist and newest member, Brad Graham, has found his pocket also, weaving heavily processed textures into the mix with superb effect, and occasionally taking over the lead vocals. It is a rare occurrence when you leave a venue feeling like you have witnessed an outstanding artistic performance that carries inexplicable importance. It's even rarer when the muse visits the room of a local band, as was the case here. But it is the rarest of all evenings when every single member of the audience is cognizant of those facts and reveling in the moment.

Rick Tvedt editor: Rick's Cafe, Wisconsin's Regional Music News 2003

