

11.18.03

“Brooklyn's Sea Ray soar, attack and inspire like birds of prey. The sextet's smart new sophomore album *Stars at Noon* is a gorgeous, bursting collection of rock songs that are delicate and careful but still forceful and manic ... enough to make even a daytime sky glitter.”

Sea Ray
Stars at Noon
(Self-Starter Foundation)

How does yet another New York City rock band make itself stand apart from the amp-toting masses? Brooklyn sextet Sea Ray has one solution: Walk softly and carry a big stick—or, rather, a big cello. Instead of trying to reinvent the three-chord wheel, the group chooses to augment its shimmering chamber-rock with a cluster of classical instruments (including viola and piano) and sprawling, multilayered production. Judging by the sound of *Stars at Noon*, they've chosen wisely.

The record's nine tracks—made up of equal parts '60s psychedelia, '80s *Psychocandy* swirl and '90s indie jangle—are less stand-alone songs than one snaking soundscape, a continuous flow of reverb and ruminative texture. Vocalist and guitarist Jordan Warner doesn't steer too far, lyrically, from love lost and found; *Stars* opens with the sweeping, cinematic heartbreaker “Sister Gone,” followed by the wry, Luna-like “Revelry” and “Stray

Dog's Got It Made,” a paean to the willfully alone. Later numbers like “Swear to Your Face” and “Hall of Fame” come dipped in equal amounts of bitter-sweet regret and longing.

For all the album's emotional vulnerability, however, Sea Ray is no pushover. When Warner sings on the Hollywood-themed “Nicholas Ray,” “We're from New York, not Beverly Hills / And I have never lost a fight,” there's enough quiet conviction in his voice to make you believe he can do more with his fists than just clutch them picturesquely to his chest. Good thing, because all that heart wouldn't be much use without a backbone.

—Leah Greenblatt

TimeOut
New York

12.18.03



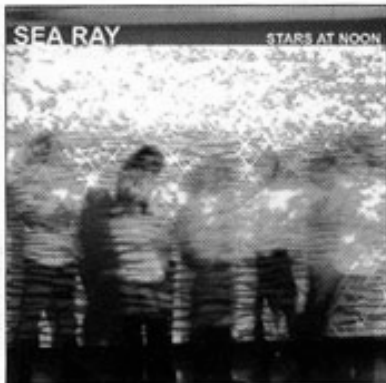
THE FACE

UK, 10.03

“Debut album for a band that owes more to shoegazers My Bloody Valentine and the Beach Boys than to punk-funk. Cello and keyboards join rock instruments to make good songs full of melancholy joy. Watch them rise.”

CMJ New Music Report®

9.01.03



SEA RAY

Stars At Noon (Self-Starter)
Peaceful, bittersweet and often angelic, Sea Ray's *Stars At Noon* seeps in space-rock balladry bliss. Featuring cello, soft vocals, electric piano and synthesizers along with the guitars, this six-piece ensemble from Brooklyn, New York tackles pop music with a cinematic ele-

gance and a stargazing dreaminess. An array of atmospheric compositions makes up the album, which gracefully swoops down and scoops listeners up right off the bat with opener "Sister Gone" — a song with a striking melody that tumbles through a wash of string-soaked, prominent sighs. The track introduces the earnest drive and delicate transitions of an album that is at once reflective, airy and stimulating; sparkling standout moments are showcased in the stirring and passionate progression of "Quiver," the somber, moody tale of "Swear To Your Face," and the unhurried, brilliantly sad explosion of feeling that closes the disc with "Hall Of Fame." In having the vision to imagine *Stars At Noon*, Sea Ray invokes the chill of night and the warmth of layered melody with each and every note.
— Antonia Santangelo

R.I.Y.L.: Essex Green, Matt Pond PA, South

NEW YORK

9.29.03

16 HOT BANDS THAT ARE CHANGING THE NEW YORK SOUNDSCAPE.

Sea Ray

Sounds like: Easy-on-the-ears, dreamy pop for people who like Yo La Tengo and Spiritualized.

Worth the wait: Originally a two-guitars-bass-and-drums band, Sea Ray later busied up the stage with a cellist and a keyboard player. After years of recording and performing together and opening for everyone from Interpol to Yo La Tengo to Girls Against Boys, the Brooklyn-based band recently signed with indie label the Self-Starter Foundation.

Keeping it real: They've gained cred with an all-too-rare lack of pretense. "One girl complimented us after a show," says keyboardist Jeff Sheinkopf, "for being the only band of the night that wasn't wearing white studded belts."

Time Out New York

9.24.03

“... Moments of heart-stopping melodic beauty”

The Sun

JANUARY 27, 2004

POP

Deep Sea Diving

By MARTIN EDLUND

Brooklyn's Sea Ray rode a wave of interest going into their sold-out show at Sin-e Thursday night. Last year's album "Stars at Noon" (Self-Starter) is still a college-radio staple, and the band opens the recent "NY: The Next Wave Compilation" disc, which also includes up-and-comers like Stellastarr*, Elefant, and the Fever.

Unlike these bands, which continue to mine the shallow well of garage rock and post-punk for ideas, Sea Ray's music is dense, multi-instrumental, and adventurous, drawing on the likes of Luna, Echo and the Bunnymen, Interpol, and the Church. (The connection to the last band was reinforced by Marty Wilson-Piper's presence at my table Friday night; he was there sizing up the band as a possible opening act for the Church's upcoming American tour.)

Lead singer Jordan Warner sang in a confident, mellifluous voice. Almost British-sounding, it was warm and soft around the edges, perfect for sending his saucer-like words out over the top of the band's sometimes-dense sound. His sweeping delivery and big, inviting eyes contrast sharply with his gruff, dismissive stage demeanor, creating something like the cognitive dissonance fans must feel seeing golden-voiced bad boys like Ryan Adams and Noel Gallagher perform.

But for Sea Ray the music is not interchangeable with the man. Sea Ray counts six musicians — bass, drums,

cello, keyboards, and two on guitar — and no one seemed to lack for something to do. Colin Brooks put on a bravura performance on drums, making them sound like some playful, steam-shooting machine. Muscular and quick, he constantly altered his patterns, signaling landslide-like shifts to the other band members.

Anne Brewster's quicksilver cello lines softened the songs and gave them a liquid melancholy. Jeff Sheinkopf's keyboards strung notes like Christmas lights and fired off electronic sounds that whirled and sparked like Chinese fireworks. Videos broadcast over the heads of the band added a level of visual noise, complementing the songs like another instrument.

Musically and lyrically, the songs played with themes of freedom and restraint. Sea Ray opened the set with "Stray Dog's Got It Made," a fairly typical tale of longing to be out from under one's responsibilities. Rather than finding escape in the image of a bird in flight or some such thing, Warner chose the image of a mangy stray dog. "The stray dog's got it best," he sang, "he's got no master / and he's got no master plan." In the very next song, "Revelry," he offered a conflicting message. After breaking up with a lover, he sang, "Now I'm free / but I feel no revelry."

The theme expressed itself musically in "Hall of Fame," which ended the night. The song was both the most subdued and the most frenzied of the evening. It began delicately with deep-

picked guitar notes, plunked piano, then a lullaby of cello and the tapping of a cymbal. It didn't take off until two minutes in, and even then was carefully controlled. Building, the cello became streaks on glass, the guitars turned strummed and distorted. The drumbeat doubled and gradually upped the pace. At the five-minute mark, the song was a cacophony, and just before it ended the air became so agitated you felt it might rip.

♦ ♦ ♦



YELLOW SUBMARINE The members of Sea Ray: Anne Brewster, Colin Brooks, I-Huei Go, Jeff Sheinkopf, Jordan Warner, and Greg Zinman.

HEE JIN KANG



12.03

“Sea Ray will likely draw more than a few Radiohead comparisons ... however, those cold English gentlemen could learn something from the warm chamber pop pillow that is Stars at Noon.”

Paste Magazine (GA)

3.04



“Sea Ray has created a record that shimmers, sparkles, and downright revels in its own glorious shoegazing wash of sound.”

Splendid E-Zine

11.24.03

“Sea Ray write the kind of songs that threaten to save your life, while at the same time prompting your heartstrings to concede defeat.”

Impact Press (Orlando)

10.11.03

“An expertly performed album of shifting emotions, poppy tunes that melt into darker, sometimes psychedelic, songs.”

HEXP (Seattle)

10.03

“Flat-out gorgeous.”

CrashinIn.Com

10.03

“Sea Ray's music never disappoints... each song is a masterpiece in its own right. It is by far one of the best albums of the year.”

The Leader (Milwaukee)

11.11.03

“A splendid, beautiful, and triumphant piece of work.”

ConcertAndCo.com (France)

12.03

“Sweet and beautiful pop ... you'll be left wanting more.”

Syft Records (Osaka, Japan)

10.21.03

“A magical and dreamy pop album. A must have.
THE POP ALBUM MASTERPIECE!”

Lightning Head Zine (Tokyo, Japan)

10.03

“Top quality indie rock!”

StartToday (Japan)

12.03

“Genius.”