

REVIEWS

OF MONTREAL

*Paralytic Stalks*

[Polyvinyl]

For a guy so down on humanity and obsessed with his own psychological flaws—bitterness, egotism, trouble loving and being loved—Kevin Barnes sure makes life-affirming music. The Of Montreal mastermind has long used psychedelic rock and funk as vehicles for self-analysis. On the group's 11th album he goes spelunking deep into his soul, dredging up his darkest impulses and subjecting them to his music's neon glow. All the while he keeps things funky, although not in the hyperactive style of his last couple of discs. On "Dour Percentage" and "We Will Commit Wolf Murder" he imagines Parade-era Prince jamming with Marc Bolan or David Bowie, and the collision of outsider R&B and fantastical '70s rock stops either sound from seizing control. Barnes is less restrained in the lyrical department, but references to "quotidian characters" and "agnostic transubstantiation" never sound like textbook babble. He's brainy enough for academia, but belongs in fishnets and headbands. —Kenneth Partridge

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