

REVIEWS

GUIDED BY VOICES

**Class Clown Spots a UFO**

[Guided by Voices Inc.]

You'd think Robert Pollard had something to prove. Although the singer and songwriter kept plenty busy on his own during (and after) Guided by Voices' 2004-2010 hiatus, he seems to have barely dipped into his always-towering stockpile of songs. The band's latest is the second of three albums planned for release this year, and it's trademark GBV: 21 songs in 39 minutes, from fragmentary sketches to fully formed lo-fi pop gems. The title track is one of the latter, crackling with bright guitars and Pollard's faux-British accent, while "They and Them" floats briefly past on acoustic guitar and surprisingly tight vocal harmonies. There are plenty of ramshackle moments as well—"Worm W/ 7 Broken Hearts" is a 50-second burst of Eastern-flavored guitar, shouted vocals and tape hiss—but it all harks back to the wobbly charm Guided by Voices established on seminal early '90s albums like *Propeller* and *Bee Thousand*. —Eric R. Danton

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