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Music

The Scotland Yard Gospel Choir

Bloodshot

Poppy, erotic, and even choral on occasion

by j. poet

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This oddly named band isn't from Scotland (although it's obvious they've listened to more than a few Belle and Sebastian albums), nor are they especially religious, although a vague secular spirituality does infuse some of the tunes. The Chicago band's 2003 debut, *I Bet You Say That to All the Boys*, was raucous in places, as



much punk as arty pop; this time the pop predominates. Main songwriter Elia Einhorn has a predilection for the darker side of life, and his gentle melodies and inventive arrangements—which include cello, delicate acoustic strumming, haunted piano, and an actual choir—give the music its own unique resonance. "This World Has No Place for Me" marries Ellen O'Hayer's moody cello to a stomping new-wave beat to deliver a tale of depression and alienation marked by Einhorn's wailing, tear-drenched harmonies. "Obsessions" starts acoustically, moves into punishing slabs of guitar noise, and resolves with the aforementioned choir, giving us a glimpse into the emotions of a man paralyzed by his compulsion to white out portions of his Bible. But the album's most remarkable track is "I Never Thought I Could Feel This Way for a Boy," a song about coming to terms with homoerotic feelings and the confusion they engender in a guy who's always considered himself straight. It's bright and bouncy, with a driving, melodic bassline and a positive lyric sung with the perfect combination of joy and bewilderment.

The Scotland Yard Gospel Choir plays Sound Fix Records Nov. 15, the Knitting Factory Nov. 16, and Union Hall Nov. 1