

WHITE VIOLET

STAY LOST (NORMALTOWN RECORDS)

Walker Percy's novel "The Moviegoer" implored the reader to embrace the search. "Not to be onto something is to be in despair," he wrote. White Violet's sophomore album, *Stay Lost*, draws from that same pathos. "I can find another place I'd rather see," frontman Nate Nelson sings at the end of album closer, "Thankfully." It's this mindset that took the band outside of the comfort zone and helped White Violet to find their current stride. But things are only just getting started.

Stay Lost is the first album the band has recorded outside its home base of Athens, GA. The eleven songs were tracked in Kernersville, NC, with Scott Solter, a master engineer known for his work with the likes of Centro-Matic, Spoon, and Superchunk. Over the course of a few weeks, Nelson (vocals/guitar), Lemuel Hayes (drums), Vaughan Lamb (bass/vocals), and Brad Morgan (guitar) fully immersed themselves in the production of the record. There were no significant others to go home to after the session ended, no buddies to meet up with at the bar, no shitty jobs to worry about in the morning – only a studio and plenty of time to find the right sounds. And it shows: *Stay Lost* is a huge progression for the young band.

White Violet's debut, *Hiding, Mingling* was the brainchild of Nelson. The beautiful and mostly spare showing occupied the dark corners of Athens, the town in which he grew up. The occasional glimmer of a full-band sound demonstrated a penchant for breezy AM Gold. Promising live shows and a later single, "Autumn Grove," pushed White Violet further out of the dim confines of Nelson's bedroom and into the same type of wide-open space that they collectively explore throughout *Stay Lost*. The album soars aloft ethereal guitars, airtight melodies, as well as eccentric and galvanizing rhythms. Big opener "Weighs" finds White Violet riding Lamb's Krautrock-inspired groove into new sonic territory. "Fernandina" is perhaps the band's best song yet, an upbeat love letter replete with chiming guitars and a razor-sharp hook; a prime example of White Violet's developing pop sensibilities. The title track and "Grow Tall," as well as the re-working of "Autumn Grove," with its original guitar riff unseated by a grimy bass line, further illustrate a growing ear for irresistible and irrepressible melodies. Even lower-key numbers like "Topical" witness a progression; the emotional moments packing an even stronger wallop than before.