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## RECORDED REVIEWS



### The New Whole Usuals - *Martin Moeh*

Produced by Andrew Dolfie and Daniel Scobey

Recorded, mixed and mastered at ITC Productions

The New Whole Usuals, a Murfreesboro, Tenn. oddball group with an inclusionary philosophy, declare that "you too can be a new whole usual." This idea extends beyond general hospitality to tonalities, instrumentations and styles. The band's latest release, *Martin Moeh*, encompasses as many different sounds and ideas as is really advisable. Through 15 tracks, the album runs the gamut from Brian Wilson-esque multi-part vocal arrangements to harpsichord counterpoint and to bizarre experimental sound effects. Obviously using heavy classical influence, the eighth and ninth tracks, "Big" and "Small," for example, fluctuate between cartoonish wind sequences and baritone-heavy vocal textures, sometimes expressing discernable lyrics, sometimes not. The New Whole Usuals definitely seem to have employed a full orchestra's worth of ideas in this effort. Jazz chords and sudden time and key signature changes don't frighten these adventurers. The very next song, "You Will Become," transitions into sweeping '70s rock ballad territory, with banjo and electric guitar, followed by the psychedelic rock of "Microscopic Pete vs. The Angry Duck." The latter incorporates trumpet improvisations over a rambling sing-a-long and full brass section.

Andrew Dolfie's vocal stylings are equally changeable, varying between delivery reminiscent of Barenaked Ladies, Belle and Sebastian and Elliott Smith, alternately harsh and intimate. "My Friend Sheila," the only track credited to both Andrew Dolfie and Daniel Scobey, includes an almost Debussy-inspired piano part and Smiths-like confessional lyricism. Never adhering to strictly one idea, the song incorporates whispering and other various sound effects. The words "At last" are uttered before the song slows and suddenly becomes a circus waltz complete with bells, then gives way to the acoustic guitar, laptop rhythms, and soft crooning of "Go to Bed," a tale of insomnia and arguments.

At first off-putting, this infectious album ultimately crawls under the skin. It's quicker than listening to 12 separate records, but it packs the same punch. (Me and the Machine Records)

[www.thenewwholeusuals.com](http://www.thenewwholeusuals.com)

-Julia Reidy

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