

INDIE SUPERGROUP **mister heavenly** INTRODUCES US

BY ELIZABETH THOMPSON
PHOTOGRAPHED
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TO "DOOM-WOP."



Most bands form with the intention of eventually recording music together. For Mister Heavenly—an indie supergroup featuring Man Man’s Ryan Kattner, Islands’ Nick Thorburn, drummer Joe Plummer of Modest Mouse and the Shins and actor Michael Cera as their touring bass player—it was the other way around. “It was an accidental record that turned into an accidental band,” says Kattner of the group’s debut album, *Out of Love*, due August 16th on Sub Pop. Thorburn, who founded Mister Heavenly with Kattner, says the two kicked around the idea of playing together for years, “But I never thought it would go beyond bar talk,” he says (helpfully noting, “Not as in Bartok the composer, but the kind of talking that takes place in a bar”). Finally deciding to give it a go, the two agreed that if they liked what they produced, they would “just put the songs on the Internet for free,” says Kattner, “And that would be that.”

Instead, they ended up with enough songs for an entire album. Plummer, needing a break from life in Portland, took Kattner up on an invitation to play drums and helped record a demo in New York. Cera, a friend of Thorburn’s, isn’t on the album but tours with the group when he can. This isn’t, however, a movie star’s hyper-conscious attempt “to slum it with a band and load his own gear,” Thorburn says. “He has no preconceived notion about what kind of lifestyle he should be living. It’s kind of refreshing.”

For *Out of Love*, Kattner and Thorburn display their shared fondness for contrasting jaunty melodies with brutal lyrics. They’ve given this sound the tongue-in-cheek name “doom-wop,” because, Thorburn explains, “we thought it would be funny to start a band with a made-up genre.”

Although they don’t take themselves too seriously (getting a straight answer out of Thorburn is not easy), this is no joke-band; the record includes many a wounded heart and tortured relationship. “I like that this album is about different kinds of doomed love,” says Kattner, referencing, as an example, the track “Pineapple Girl,” about the pen pal relationship between Panama dictator Manuel Noriega and a 12-year-old Michigan girl. “It makes the record sound like a movie,” Kattner says. “It would be the soundtrack for *Valley Girl*—if it was crossed with *Mad Max*.”



(l-r) Nick Thorburn, Ryan Kattner, Joe Plummer

WHAT'S ON THEIR SUMMER PLAYLISTS

Ryan: "Peaches," **The Stranglers**;

"No One's Better Sake," **Little Joy**;

Nick: "Cowgirl in the Sand," **Neil Young**;

"You've Really Got a Hold on Me," **Smokey Robinson**;

Joe: "Having a Party," **Sam Cooke**;

"I Wanna Do It," **Sonny and the Sunsets**