



Photograph by Jenny Jimenez



## Telekinesis!

FROM SEATTLE TO TOKYO AND THE WHOLE WORLD IN BETWEEN.

Seattle is synonymous with music. Michael Lerner, who with a little help from talented friends, is Telekinesis!. He attempts to pinpoint the inimitable vibe of the town: "The music scene here is beyond amazing. There are so many bands and everyone talks to each other and hangs out. I don't think that happens so much in Los Angeles, New York or Chicago." The home of seminal labels such as Sub Pop, Barsuk and Suicide Squeeze Records, 2008 sensation Fleet Foxes, represent the face of Seattle's current music scene, which has evolved towards a new generation of off-kilter, alt-pop that is pleasing critics and crowds in equal measure. With a self-titled debut album out now, *Telekinesis!* is on track to do Seattle's unimpeachable pedigree proud.

Free and easy, impetuous, unaffected, inspired: adjectives that roll off the tongue after listening to this impressive album. From the very first guitar chord, *Telekinesis!* is imbued with hazy, sunshiny loveliness, which proves ridiculously infectious. Immediately striking, is a sense of unrefined spontaneity, unsurprising when you learn each song was tracked and mixed by Death Cab for Cutie guitarist, Chris Walla, in a single day. Although this technique highlights the artless strength of *Telekinesis!*, it was actually a matter of necessity rather than grand artistic design. Lerner reveals: "Chris Walla had about two weeks in between tours, and we knew that was going to be a little tight. So when we got to the studio, we started working on the first song, and we both looked at each other and said, 'let's do it this way, yes?' When you do it that way, there isn't any room left for over thinking or overanalysing. There's something really disconcerting and exciting about making a record to tape. It's truthful. It doesn't lie. You can't quite fake it like you can on computers."

Faking it is not something Lerner needs to do. An instinctive musician, he took lessons on the drums, but just "picked up the bass and piano on my own, and if

you asked me what note I was playing, I wouldn't be able to tell you." Lerner's father was a DJ in Seattle for 30 years, so music has always been of supreme importance: "I remember being so excited about music, I would say to myself, some day, I want to do that."

Lerner's hazy vocals take the listener on a track-by-track tour to Liverpool, North Carolina and Tokyo, via the rest of the world. The album's travelling themes are in part due to Lerner's romantic circumstances. "When I was writing this, my girlfriend was living in North Carolina and I was living in Seattle, so that was a big theme. I have a tendency to wear my heart on my sleeve." Although there is not one weak song, the standout track is *Awkward Kisser*. With noticeably more 1950s - 1960s pop influences, Lerner's penchant for this musical era began at school: "We used to have these dances called Sock Hops. Boys would dress up in white t-shirts and rolled up jeans, and slick back their hair, and girls would dress in poodle skirts. We would dance to songs like *Louie Louie*, I remember really loving those dances."

Without a full-time band, Lerner writes and plays his instruments in the studio alone, yet when touring and performing live takes to the stage with fellow Seattle musicians David, Jonie and Chris. On the difference between the writing and performing processes, "some songs are completely different arrangements," Lerner discloses, "it's really exciting to make a record, and then take it out on tour and have things evolve and change." Next up for *Telekinesis!* is a European tour to promote the album beginning late September, with an Australian tour planned for March 2010. For further information on the band and tour dates, please visit [www.myspace.com/telekinesismusic](http://www.myspace.com/telekinesismusic).

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