

***Through changes of pace and intelligent, introspective lyrics, Car Seat Headrest have created a work of raw depth and beauty***

Pull your sweater sleeves down over your hands and start nervously biting your nails, lo-fi's troubled outcast is back and he's more self-loathing than ever. Mere months after his debut for *Matador Records*, *Car Seat Headrest* has gained the kind of glowing popularity a self-confessed outcast like *Will Toledo*, would probably not have envisaged a couple of years ago.

'Teens of Denial' is the first album featuring new material. Previous release '[Teens of Style' \(2015\)](#), consisted of studio reworkings of songs from *Car Seat Headrest's* previous twelve albums of lo-fi indie, made available via the *Band Camp* website in a pay what you want deal.

Another noticeable change is the line-up. At first a solo outlet of *Toledo's* angst, *Car Seat Headrest* has matured into a full band, featuring *Ethan Ives*, *Andrew Katz* and *Seth Dalby*. Aside from those factors though, the trademarks that gained *Car Seat Headrest* such a following in the first place are all here, the self-doubt, the shyness, the self-deprecation. It's all channelled through a fuzzy DIY sound that gives the band a nostalgic feel, a sound that seems to hark back to the early 1990s.

The album kicks off with a disembodied voice shouting, "*you're listening to Car Seat Headrest*" before a wall of surf guitar, which owes more than a little debt to *Pixies*, kicks in. 'Teens of Denial' gets off to an angry and raucous beginning with 'Fill in the Blank.' This is every bad teenage party you ever remember attending. "*I am freaking out in my mind, in a house that isn't mine*" shouts *Toledo*, over the cacophony. This one is for the people hiding out in the bathroom while the teenage discovery unfolds without them

Lead single, 'Vincent' seems to break from *Car Seat Headrest* tradition slightly, because it features a three minute intro and comes in at over seven minutes long. The guitar loops, there is an unease and the samples, glitches and squalling guitar actually showcases how competent the musicians who make up *Car Seat Headrest* are. When the vocals begin, the themes of alienation are still rife, "*half the time I want to go home*" *Toledo* pleads with the listener. 'Vincent,' at times, gives off a 1980s vibe that feels ever so slightly dated, but *Teens of Denial* does have nostalgia running through it like a stick of rock.

In keeping with that theme, 'Joe Gets Kicked Out of School for Using Drugs with Friends (but Says This Isn't a Problem),' could easily be an outtake from *Beck's* first release, 'One Foot in the Grave' (1993). *Toledo* sounds like *Beck* when he muses, "*I get to know myself every weekend, I am weak*". The acoustic guitars have the same dead, blunt, worn sound that *Beck* was so fond of. The recording is like it was created in the bedroom of someone on the fringes. In fact on songs like 'Drunk Drivers/Killer Whales' and 'Not What I Needed,' decades past seem to drip all over them, with the former even featuring *Toledo* attempting a misjudged *Jonathan Richmond* tinged falsetto, the latter, however is driven by *Ethan Ives'* meaty bass line.

'Teens of Denial' contains an interesting mix of the light and heavy. It seems things are moodier and angrier this time around. The claustrophobic noise of 'Unforgiving Girl (She's not An),' sounds like an adolescent breakdown. The suddenly, all at once it gives why to the

peaceful nonchalance of 'The Ballad of the Costa Concordia,' with the line, "*I used to like the mornings, I'd survived another night*" and suddenly the narrator is broken again. 'Teens of Denial' captures teenage mood swings better than many albums before it. Through changes of pace and intelligent, introspective lyrics, *Car Seat Headrest* have created a work of raw depth and beauty. 'Teens of Denial' is not without its flaws but you can't help but give it room in your heart.

'Teens of Denial' is out now via *Matador Records*.

***This Car Seat Headrest article was written by Jessica Otterwell, a GIGsoup contributor. Edited by Natalie Whitehouse. Photo credit : Anna Webber***