

Critical Praise for *William of Orange*

The Caribbean do much to move themselves to the forefront of pop fit for late-night headphone sessions in wood-paneled dens.

--*Pitchfork*

Kentoff's vocals are gorgeous.... The drumming, no matter who is doing it, is also key.... The Caribbean is an amazing band with a great back catalog but *William of Orange* may be the perfect introduction for those wanting to hear more and experience this extraordinary band's recorded sounds.

--*Uncommon Folk*

The band writes what would seem at first to be straight-ahead pop songs, but what strikes soon enough are unpredictable time signatures, the subtle use of samples and electronic manipulation, and clever and evocative lyrics. These are no ordinary, lazily written ditties – each song is a complex work of art.

--*Lost at Sea*

This EP is amazing. Unabashed pop with post-rock production and hints at alt-country twang, the five tracks here all hit the perfect note at least once, some holding it for the song's length.... A perfect soundtrack for cooking, cleaning, making out, sleeping in, driving, sitting on your porch, counting stars, breathing, existing.

--*Stylus*

The Caribbean's songs take a little time to settle, but when they do they stick....Imagine a hasty night exit from your favorite bar and a long walk home in the drizzle.

--*Sponic*

The band is at their best when they turn their oblique ear for melody into grounds for emotional attachment.... In all, the *William of Orange* EP is as deliberately postmodern as pop comes these days, but in spite of its constructive precision, it's still a pretty listen – and, more than this, it ends up leaving an indelible, if quirky, emotional mark.

--*Splendid*

It's hard to explain the Caribbean – they exist in their own plane, one maybe even secret agents would have trouble finding. But it's a lovely, eccentric place....

--*Erasing Clouds*

Front man Michael Kentoff's breathy, nasal croon is at its most expressive on this EP, and his knack for extracting unexpected chord progressions from his acoustic guitar remains unabated. A full-length album of such quality would have definitely landed in my Top 20 of 2004; as it stands, though, *William of Orange* will just have to duke it out with Make Believe for the Best EP title.

--*Mundane Sounds*

Critical Praise for *History's First Know It All*

Cynical, yet naively hopeful ... difficult but rewarding, albeit in that William Carlos Williams kind of way.

--*Magnet*

You're forced to occupy their barren pop architecture.... You don't understand it, but, though you might not admit it, you do hope it will understand you. Or at least not destroy you.... You feel like there's a real live pop song in there somewhere, but it seems that most of the essential moments have been recorded over with silence or incidental noise. There's obviously still a skeleton to hang a song on, but you start to wonder whether you're the one who was supposed to bring it.... These songs are for real, but they're not about disappointment, or complacency, or shame, or attention, or glee. They're about themselves. Without ironic distance, such oblique experiments can seem exhausting. But only on the giving end: it takes a humble and prolific writer, some cunning musicians, a very patient engineer, and an overarching commitment to self-censorship to pull an album like this off.

--Pitchfork

Listening to the album on headphones is like being stalked by a particularly inventive ghost. The piano ballads and falsetto vocals give it up, though – these mad scientists are romantics at heart....

--Philadelphia Citypaper.net

It's like *Mulholland Drive* within a Burt Bacharach song, fascinating in ways both everyday and esoteric.

--Erasing Clouds

The nimble, unpredictable drumming suggests jazz respectability even as crunchy acoustic guitars, watery keyboard flourishes and sub-basement bass lines circle the rhythm like drugged birds. As haphazard as that may sound, it's startlingly cohesive....The Caribbean's music is not for everyone, and certainly not for lazy minds. Implicitly, this is pop music, but not like any pop music you've heard before.

--Sponic

Stretching out from their lovely eponymous 1999 release and 2001's *Verse by Verse*, The Caribbean now straddle the kind of ground inhabited by the Blue Nile, Jim O'Rourke, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Chico Hamilton, Gary Burton, Weegee, The Sweet Smell of Success and The Go-Betweens whilst being bathed in the afterglow of assorted soft-pop luminaries like The Moon, The Association or Sagittarius. Sounds kind of special, huh? *History's First Know It All* ... hangs together with a strange, gawky, awkward beauty.

--Tangents

History's First Know-It-All is one of the best constructed, composed, and informed albums that I've heard in a long, long time. I know I'm gushing here, sounding more a fan than a reviewer, but this record has made a fan out of me. Records like this are why I keep running this web site against all better judgment.

--Independentmind.com

The Caribbean knows that even the slightest touches can radically transform a song notice how firmly rooted each song on this record is in a strong, indelible melody, even as the Caribbean steadfastly avoids obvious choruses, or throws odd chords into otherwise standard progressions.

--Mundane Sounds

History's First Know-It-All is another piece of evidence supporting the proposition that The Caribbean is among the best bands working today. Ignore it, and you'll have to lie in the future about how you were into them way back when before everyone knew how great they were.

--A Common Sense

Vocalist Michael Kentoff takes on Ira Kaplan's whispered croon to stunning effect on this assured collection of avant-pop symphonettes.

--Rosco

Critical Praise for *Verse by Verse*

Quite possibly the only band to have read Jane Jacobs' seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and understood its pertinence to music as well as urbanism, the Caribbean seems to have a keen sense of how much the homogeneity of suburban living has afflicted modern popular music.

--c-ville, Charlottesville's News & Arts Weekly

....[A]s if XTC, Burt Bacharach, the Smiths and Badfinger all got together for a brawl but ended up becoming friends and having coffee together instead.

--ACE Weekly

....cheerful hopelessness....

--Splendid

An attentive listen to The Caribbean gives you the sense experimental leanings and a taste for brevity should meet more often.... The Caribbean is dippy like Syd Barrett, concise like Guided by Voices.... What initially sounds stark is actually loaded.

--*The Coast, Halifax's Weekly*

"Have You Thought About Turning Pro?" [has] got one of the crunchiest, most satisfying guitar interludes this side of Superchunk.

--*Shredding Paper*

The impressive thing about the Caribbean is their ability to shine as pure, almost folk songwriters even with the use of electronic sounds.

--*basement-LIFE.com*

....[T]he overall feel is something like a subtle soundtrack to a dream. If this sounds confusing, it probably is...because we honestly can't come up with the exact words to describe this.

--*babysue*

[*Verse by Verse*] is a record that grows on you. It sticks around in the corners of the subconscious and comes back to you when you're not expecting it. That's something that great records do. It's starting to sound like a great record to me.

--*The Independent Mind*

All of this arranging legerdemain serves some fine songs with the sorts of melodic and chordal contours that at first hearing sound unexpected but prove to be guided by their own satisfying logic.

--*Milk*

More often than not, *Verse by Verse* drifts lazily through your ears and reverberates through your mind, although it may take a few listens to notice ... each instrument hover just off the ground, subdued and with clarity.... Comparisons to other artists are occasionally notable; a fraction of the wide range of Beatles influences are detectable, and the guys sometimes sound not unlike their polarcoastal indie "new lounge" counterparts, Death Cab for Cutie. At times, both comparisons can be made in the same song, such as the opener, "I'll Simplify My Life (In Fremont)," featuring Ringo's beat, Lennon's piano, and Benjamin Gibbard's boyish croon. Meanwhile, "To Call Your Very Own" resembles a lost Loud Family song.

--*Pitchfork*

To say that this album is good isn't quite enough, yet describing why it's so good is a difficult task.... I find something different to love about this album every time I listen. Depending upon my mood, I latch on to the quieter and prettier tracks that are almost hallucinogenic in their lulling quality or to the more poppy, guitar-based songs that give a nod to the Guided by Voices and Applies in Stereo folks. But all of these songs flow perfectly, with a quiet and just slightly quirky quality that makes this album wholly unique. An almost perfect release!

--*Delusions of Adequacy*

Interesting, high-pitched percussion and synthesized tidbits lurk just behind the forefront of several tunes, always a welcome break from the rock rule that this beloved space is exclusively reserved for guitar and/or vocals.... "To Call Your Very Own" begins as if it could be a simply sweet pop tune, a la '60s sensitive pop-rockers The Left Banke, then slides into what more resembles Pavement covering The Left Banke.

--*Flak Magazine*

Critical Praise for *The Caribbean* EP (Little Voice)

Better than a fuzzy blanket on a rainy day.

--*ReadysetAesthetic*