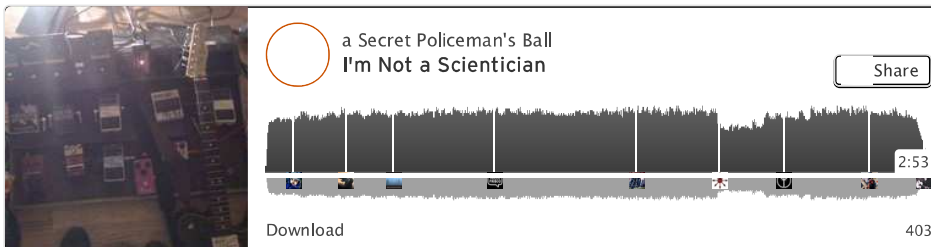




WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2013

## A Secret Policeman's Ball - 'Teenage Crimewave' CD Review (MVD Audio)



*A Secret Policeman's Ball started when Greg, Mike, and Jesse finally took the "No Girls Allowed" sign off their club house and let Nikki read their comic books – from the band's bio*



Murfreesboro, TN four-piece A Secret Policeman's Ball released their debut CD, *Teenage Crimewave*, earlier this summer and the band's sound is an intriguing and compelling mix of seemingly disparate styles. At the core of the band's sound is a wall of sparkling shoegazer fuzz which is complemented a healthy layer of synthesizers, all of which leaves the band sounding somewhat like Blondie or Lush. Categorizing the band's sound through isn't as simple as I just made it sound as vocalist Nikki Oliff can quickly switch from melodic clean vocals to a throat-shredding growl while the other members of the band veer off from melodic post-punk to menacing black metal and

pounding hardcore.

The disc starts with "Brian's House", which combine Oliff's angelic vocals with an ominous and menacing back metal buildup which subsequently crashes into hardcore fury and ends by slowly dissipating as the musical storm fades. "I'm Not A Scientist" builds up a Garbage/Lush-like wall of sound with swirling atmospheric guitar lines and prominent synthesizers before Oliff switches into throat-shredding vocals that sound like Courtney Love's early work with Hole. "A Flock of Beagles" switches gears completely as this track sounds like an 80's college rock number with traded-off male/female vocals and guitarist Greg Harp's vocals sound a bit like Let's Active's Mitch Easter. Skipping forward in the disc, "They Already Banged" and "Padfoot" could pass for British post-punk dance club numbers from 10-to-20 years back. Seemingly never content to stand still, these two tracks are followed by "Trying To Find Shon a New Hat", which is blast of hardcore fury that clocks in under a minute.

A Secret Policeman's Ball's bio describes the band as having a "can't quite put your finger on it" sound. Given the seamless transitions between all the disparate musical elements on this disc, I'm guess these guys must have fascinating record collections. When asked in an interview with *The Saturday Independent* on how the band got together, they responded "We all met in an online chat group for *Jewel fans*." Generally, I'd laugh at a comment like this but...with all the different influences that ASPB are pulling into their music, it seems possible this is true.

### CONTACT INFO.

MIKE

New Address: 17 S. William Street,  
#4B New York, NY 10004

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