



ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

Merrweather Post Pavilion

With **Animal Collective's** ninth studio album, *Merrweather Post Pavilion*, the question is where to go at such a time in a successful career—one in which the band has become most noted for pushing an avant garde sound into the mainstream. *Merrweather...* instead simplifies the music without

dumbing it down, opening a vast space for lavish, layered vocals to hover and swoop in a different, familiar, direction. Electronics player/

sampler Geologist (a.k.a. Brian Weitz) says, "Over time, we've felt more comfortable with the lyrics and the vocals standing out a bit more than in the early days. A lot of people said that the vocals on *Strawberry Jam* (Domino, 2007) were way more up front and clear than previous records. To me, [the vocals] seem to mix in better with the music."

This approach is most evident in "My Girls," where the familiar stacks of triol instruments are replaced with a single rubbery bass note. The behemoth low end intertwines with dancing harmonies. "We realized a long time ago that if we wanted to keep changing it up to keep it fresh for ourselves, we'd never be able to satisfy everybody," Weitz adds. "So there wouldn't be any point in trying [to appeal to everyone]." *Merrweather...* does not play it safe or bait the public but shows the band growing and maturing together as musicians. "Each record has been a steady step upwards in terms of more people listening to our music," Weitz shares. "We hope the same will happen this time. We're not expecting a 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' moment to happen or anything, nor are we trying for one. We [can't] predict the audience reaction even if we tried."

Animal Collective's love of writing and performing, as well as the band's ability to force the listener to think, has kept its audience waiting and predicting its next move. With *Merrweather...* it has achieved eminent status. (LR)

Animal Collective: www.animalcollective.org

Domino Records: www.dominorecords.us