

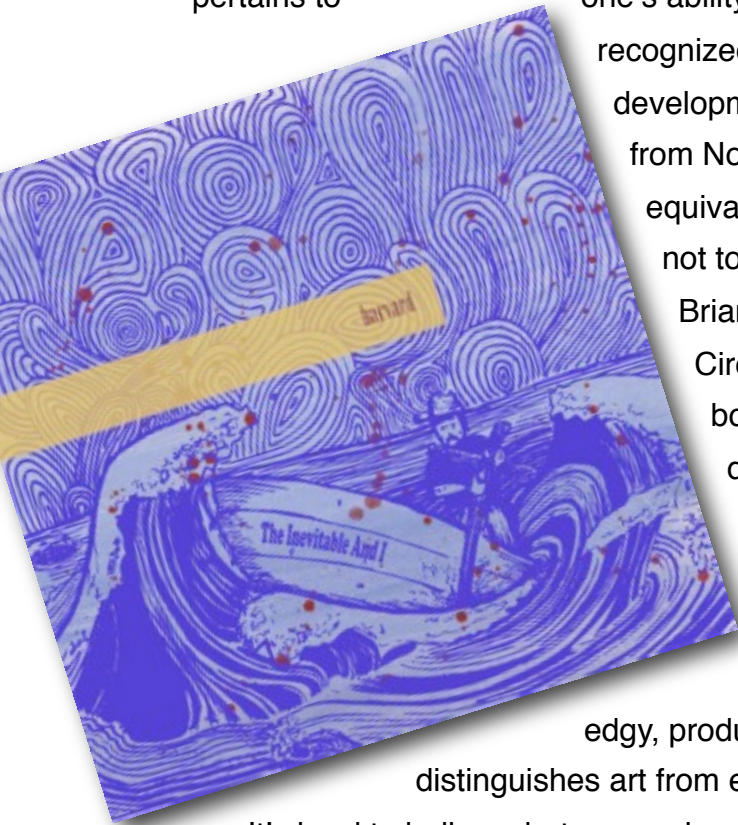
# Harvard - The Inevitable And I

The illustrious psychologist's, Maslow's, "Hierarchy of Needs" ends, at last, with the term of self-actualization. This psychology term is acknowledged as a concept that pertains to

one's ability to fully understand themselves and is recognized as the final level of one's inner psychological development. It would be absurd to propose that a quintet from North Carolina has achieved such a lofty musical equivalent merely with their first full-length, but it's hard not to grant Harvard such a distinction. Produced by Brian Mcternan (Thrice, Circa survive, Hot Rod Circuit, Movielife, Senses Fail), the expectations are bound to be towering. Luckily, Harvard doesn't disappoint. An incredible blend of post-hardcore and indie that you don't need to study your ass off to get into, The Inevitable And I is the new epitome of a sound that incorporates an expansive, grandiose, indie-rock sound with an edgy, produced touch. Add that intelligent aesthetic that distinguishes art from entertainment, and you've got yourself a record.

It's hard to believe, but a groovier vibe hasn't been produced like this since Minus the Bear's Planet of Ice. Those are some very lofty comparisons, but Harvard fit the build very well. While it does carry on a little long, The Inevitable And I is an impressive debut that transcends genres and creates a cozy little niche all for itself.

The first signs that The Inevitable And I is something special comes after the first song, "On With Disease," sets the stage, warms you up. And a few minutes into the epic, "French Girls," Harvard reveal their true selves. The swirly guitars and dreamy atmosphere slows down and gives away to a slow, droning ambient that entrances even the most alert of listeners. As Jesse Clasen's vocals pervade your ears (usually soft and sweet, almost singer-songwriter-esque) and coos "The water is not for your lungs..." you don't expect the pounding, raging "Hell no! Hell no!"s that immediately accompany it. While it's a difficult moment to convey in writing, this short span, and many other similar moments are very much abundant on The Inevitable And I. In reflection, it's these little moments that are so outstanding, so glorious on Harvard's debut. The smooth introductions are often intriguing, like the mellifluous "She won't stop grinning now,"



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complete with handclaps, to begin “An End Weight.” Every song progresses distinctly, with many different elements not found in your every day indie-rock to create a borderline-progressive experience that keeps the listener alert and on-edge. It may take many subsequent listens, but eventually it becomes easy to catch the real draw in the tangled, grand songs- the catchy pop hooks buried deep beneath. Below the complex rhythms and rhymes lie melodious hooks that keep you coming back for more, case in point the upbeat “Hallucinating the Horse,” or the ever-growing “Memory Police.”

To refer back to the introduction, it feels as if Harvard have an amazing grasp of themselves: knowing when to keep those swirly guitars soaring, knowing when to break out in yells, and the timing to perfectly place those moments of silence and striking one-liners. Once again it’s difficult not to reference Minus the Bear and that intangible quality that can only be likened to a “groove,” where the band sounds entirely in sync with themselves and each other. On *The Inevitable and I*, there’s just enough variability to keep things interesting, but enough homogeneity to keep an inherent flow throughout without significant disruption. The most outstanding flaw on Harvard’s debut, though, is the run time. At about an hour, *The Inevitable And I* certainly isn’t something to be listened to on a whim. It would be fantastic to say the material on here holds up to the gargantuan run time, but it definitely has its share of lulls. Despite this, the music on this impressive debut is unique and strong enough to overcome the few nadirs, namely the instrumental intermission, “Tenebroso,” and a few of the later songs that run a minute too long.

Equally inviting and daunting, *The Inevitable And I* will capture your ears and hold them hostage if you give it enough listens; until, of course the soft, hushed closer “Inevitable and I” comes to its pacifying close. An intelligent record that intricately blends dark lyrics over top of a harrowing mix of post-hardcore and indie-rock with exquisite pop sensibilities hiding to and fro, *The Inevitable And I* is one hell of a debut. Sound exquisite and top notch? What else would you expect from a band with a name as illustrious as Harvard?

Recommended Songs:

French Girls

Memory Police

Hallucinating the Horse

An End Weight

Overall Grade: 89%