

Autistic Daughters—guitarist and vocalist Dean Roberts, percussionist Martin Brandlmayr, and bassist Werner Dafeldecker—returns with its sophomore effort *Uneasy Flowers*. Raconteur Roberts builds the material around a narrative involving a protagonist named Rehana and his reflections, both inner and outer, upon the people and places around him. The noir-like character of the evocative lyric writing (like "Rehana opens his mouth / Supplements his excess with elixir") is intensified when Roberts delivers them in his familiar desperate and tortured croak. The impressionistic flow that discloses the contents of Rehana's psychic topography is mirrored in the organic instrumental accompaniment the group nurtures throughout. One of the most appealing things about the trio's smoky murder ballads is their organic, spontaneous feel; the songs breathe like living organisms with their acoustic essence subtly bolstered by Brandlmayr's computer-based processing and inspired touches, such as the shotgun snare spatter in "Uneasy Flower" and the seething guitar snarl that bleeds through "Gin Over Sour Milk." Martin Siewert adds mandoguitar to one song and Chris Abrahams lends pianistic presence to three others, but in general *Uneasy Flowers* is a pure and undistilled representation of Autistic Daughters' sound (succinct, too, given the album's svelte thirty-six-minute duration). The opener "Rehana's Theme" is typical of the band's style, with Roberts' whisper accompanied by the sparse punctuation of Abrahams' piano, the bowed scrape of Dafeldecker's double bass, and Brandlmayr's vibes. Existential sonic musings that exude that finger-tracing-along-the-razor's-edge feel, *Uneasy Flowers* provides a natural complement to the books by Raymond Chandler and Cormac McCarthy crowding one's night-table.

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