



**Bowerbirds**  
**Hymns For A**  
**Dark Horse**

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With the blessing of lo-fi deity John Darnielle, and the label grace of Pitchfork king hip Grayson Currin's 'Burley Time' records (although they've since absconded for Secretly Canadian offshoot Dead Oceans), Bowerbirds are dripping with critical acclaim. But is it deserved? According to Time Out, Phil Moore and Beth Tacular cohabit in an airstream trailer somewhere in the forests of North Carolina. Indeed, debut LP 'Hymns for a Dark Hose' sounds exactly like the faux naïf arabesque a couple of web designers might produce, tucked away in the woods for a year with Beirut's back catalogue. The album's baroque folk eco aspirations are lost in nutmeg dry production and songwriting that wouldn't look out of place in a Tom Baxter support act. Bowerbirds sound like a somnambulist Grizzly Bear collaborating with Arcade Fire on an Andrew Bird satire burn. Beth Tacular's whingy accordion competes to grate on every track with Phil Moore's smarmy 'gypsy jazz' vocals; while Bowerbird's collaborative rhythm section - exclusively hi-hat and bass drum based - clunks along like the 'quirky' efforts of a Stockholm one man band. To be fair, the album has garnered almost universal praise, and I struggled with a deeply ambivalent reaction to this record. You may well love it.

**Gareth Stack**