

Jack and Meg change their Stripes

w Sarah Masanek
Staff Writer

After five albums, one may begin to doubt Meg and Jack White's ability to create interesting new material, but as Jack sings on the duo's new disc, *Get Behind Me Satan*, "I'm never gonna let you down now."

The White Stripes' unique sound combine's Jack's impressive guitar playing and expressive voice with Meg's simple yet effective drumming. However, *Get Behind Me Satan* proves that they have an ability to reinvent themselves on many other levels. The album includes 14 energetic tracks, including singles "My Doorbell" and "The Denial Twist."

The album creates a new sound by straying away from the Stripes' usual guitar prominence, instead relying on piano and percussion. Besides "Blue Orchid," which is the first track and sounds similar to much of their other work, all the tracks display something new and interesting from the pair. A marimba (like a large xylophone) is even used on the exploratory song "the Nurse," which also includes a reference to Rita Hayworth, a 1940s movie star. "Forever for Her (It's Over for Me)" is a ballad that shows Jack's talent for expressing emotion. He croons, "Everybody's reaction is changing you / But their love is only a fraction of what I can give to you," a nod, perhaps, to his controversial relationship with former girlfriend, actress Renee Zellweger.

Additionally, the simplicity of "My Doorbell" is its greatest attribute, as piano and Meg's drumming are only the accompaniments to the catchy vocals. It sounds like a 1960s pop hit with an indie-rock twist. The band incorporates another genre, which until now has been untouched: bluegrass. "Little Ghost" is a lively tale of a secret romance accented by a banjo. However, the pleasantries of those are contrasted by the heavy sounding "Instrict Blues." Jack's vocals can be compared to Robert Plant as he chants, "I want you to get with it" along with a pounding guitar.

Reportedly, this album was recorded in about two weeks, so the overall sound is not very clean. As a result, while the Whites show that they have many ideas for new songs, they don't fully develop each one. Songs such as "White Moon" show that a few chords on a piano and a slamming of cymbals can be boring. Another odd choice is a cover of Tegan and Sara's "Walking With a Ghost," which is more or less a throwaway track to pad the disc.

Get Behind Me Satan is alternative music in its true sense. Although some of the songs may seem a little underdeveloped and sloppy, it doesn't fail to remain striking. The White Stripes undeniably put in an effort in making each track sound different from the next, which is something contemporary music often misses.

