

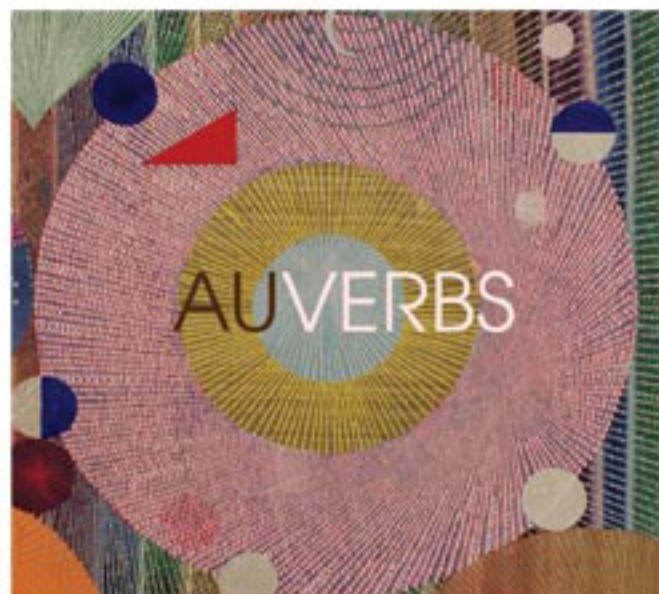
# Au - Verbs

Aagoo Records

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It's flanked by the blissful bombast of a 20-plus person vocal chorus at one end, and with the hushed strains of a wistful lullaby at the other. Between these disparate bookends lies the staggering aesthetic expanse of *Verbs*—the sophomore record from acclaimed Portland, OR. experimental pop collective Au—which, in its swirling depths and subtleties, promises to be one of this year's most satisfying surprises.

In the year's time since last leaving off with his self-titled, beautifully accomplished debut, Au (pronounced 'ay you') architect Luke Wyland has made tremendous strides beyond that record's warmly retiring sensibilities—stepping (wisely) outward, and into the less insular confines of community. In practical terms, this mostly meant acquiring a proper band—the core of which consisting of mutual multi-instrumentalists Johnathan Sielaff and Mark Kaylor—but in a vaguer sense, it meant opening up to Portland's considerable creative resources. Consequently, *Verbs* is padded out with contributions from nearly thirty collaborators, a list which includes featured vocalists Sarah Winchester (track 6; of Team Love recording artists **A Weather**) and Becky Dawson (tracks 2 and 4; of **Ah Holly Fam'ly, Saw What**), as well as members of **Yellow Swans**, **Parenthetical Girls**, and **Evolutionary Jass Band**, among many others—inadvertently resulting in a strange and singular snapshot of a very particular corner of the city's famously sprawling musical community.

The resulting record—recorded over three days at Portland's Type Foundry Studios and finished over a subsequent two-month period in Wyland's own attic studio—seamlessly segues through new and unlikely extremes with an arresting economy. Ecstatic Pop jams like "RR vs. D" rub shoulders comfortably with retreating meditations ("Two Seasons", "Summer Heat"). Moreover, the record's several distinct movements work at once with more autonomy and cohesion than ever before, with arrangements that stretch in longhand across the album's length.

*Verbs* is the elated realization of those many asymmetrical pop diamonds that shone so brightly throughout Au's artful debut (whose warm, Appalachia-informed gems found many favorable comparisons to the far-reaching likes of **Arnold Dreyblatt**, **Animal Collective**, **Terry Riley**, **Steve Reich**, and **Grizzly Bear**)—its many swift and unexpected evolutions shepherded confidently by Wyland's competent, classically-trained hand. As surprising as it is immediate, *Verbs* is infused with all of the earnest and palpable joy of its creation—the delightfully enveloping whole of which demands to be heard.

**1. All My Friends 2. Are Animals 3. Summerheat 4. RR vs. D 5. All Myself  
6. Two Seasons 7. Prelude 8. The Waltz 9. Sleep**

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