

MICE PARADE – WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LEFT-HANDED

Part children's cartoon, part career retrospective, *What It Means To Be Left-Handed* is the first Mice Parade album to be released in the band's second decade of existence. Divergent from the pop sensibilities of Mice Parade's most recent successes - *Bem-Vinda Vontade* and *Mice Parade* - it is a fresh adventure, all over the map and awash in color; splashes of West-African Highlife mingle with Flamenco, Brazilian Jazz, and the late '80s indie rock that band founder Adam Pierce was stuck on in high school.

In typical Mice Parade fashion, *What It Means To Be Left-Handed* cuts a wide stylistic swath, but Pierce's trademark stormy, intricate percussion, as well as melodic interweaving and warm, resonant vocal treatments carry throughout, stitching the pieces into a coherent whole.

Album opener "Kupanda" counterpoints bouncing vocal lilt with chiming guitars like needles of spring rain; when the drums kick in, the sky opens up with sun. "In Between Times" layers bright vocal washes with guitar fuzz, percussive mandolin, and insistent drums, dissolving into a hand-clap breakdown before coming back to its infectious, singalong, all-hands-on-deck chorus. "Fortune Of Folly" is a complex percussive journey disguised as a prancing pop jaunt, featuring some of Pierce's loveliest vocal lines to date.

There are two covers – a spirited rendition of Lemonheads classic "Mallo Cup" that swaps Dando & Co.'s snarl with plaintive, hymnlike harmony; and the closer, a lovingly drawn-out version of labelmate Tom Brosseau's "Mary Anne," dressed down with Pixies grit and a codeine cough-syrup haze.

Formed by the multi-tasking Adam Pierce in the late 90's, Mice Parade was originally a solo project. But while Pierce plays and sings the bulk of this latest effort, he summoned members of his globally-scattered touring outfit to bring their voices and instruments to the table: among the ranks are vocalist Caroline Lufkin (who also records for Temporary Residence Ltd. as a solo artist), classical guitarist Dan Lippel, and megadrummer Doug Scharin (HiM, Codeine, Rex, Enablers). In addition to his bandmates, Pierce allies himself here with a range of guest musicians: Swahili vocalist Somi (album opener "Kupanda"), Meredith Godreau of FatCat's Gregory & The Hawk ("Do Your Eyes See Sparks"), and members of the Japanese band Clammbon ("Tokyo Late Night").

From the first, *What It Means To Be Left-Handed* showcases the intricate sonics, joyful audio experimentation, and expansive worldview that make Mice Parade one of the most compelling ensembles of our time.

Mice Parade will be touring the US this fall.