

CITY LIFE

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MUSIC

edited by Lianne Steinberg



THE SONAR YEN: *Slow Picture* (Soviet Union)

gigantic sounds make for a big, big love

When you think of great debut albums by Manchester bands, there's an unwritten rule that prior to its launch, a hype machine must be in place for it to succeed (hello Oasis, Haven, Badly Drawn Boy). What The Sonar Yen lack in self-aggrandisement, they make up for in bucketloads of searing, soul-searching melody. Mike O'Neill's vocals provide layered chants over the sound, similar to Girls Against Boys' Scott McCloud. Opener 'Shot in the Dark' sets the tone of the journey – 'it's 3am and the light draws in...' It's pure nocturnal, sonic adrenaline, crashing in from all sides on a dizzy rush of fear and frenzied apprehension. The slow-building, taunting 'Decisions=Regrets' is epic and spine-tingling, with O'Neill at his most confrontational, whilst the *In Utero* inspired 'Velvet Jesus' is the kind of fuzzed-up storming anthem that will finally mark them out as genuine contenders. A stunning debut.

(9) LIANNE STEINBERG