

# CHADVANGAALEN SOFTAIRPLANE



## Chad VanGaalén : Soft Airplane

- 1 Willow Tree
- 2 Bones of Man
- 3 Cries of the Dead
- 4 Inside the Molecules
- 5 Bare feet on wet griptape
- 6 Phantom Anthills
- 7 Poisonous Heads
- 8 TMNT Mask
- 9 Molten Light
- 10 Old Man + The Sea
- 11 City of Electric Light
- 12 Rabid Bits of Time
- 13 Frozen Energon

## Bonus double LP tracks:

- 14 LTD Edition Vehicles
- 15 Eyes like a house on fire

Release Date : Sept 9 2008  
Format : CD / LP  
Genre : Indie Rock  
Catalogue number: FLCR017

Publicity:  
Canada: Ken Beattie, KillBeat Music  
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Not for export outside of Canada.



double LP:  
724101946714



CD:  
724101946721

# CHADVANGAALEN SOFTAIRPLANE

A notorious homebody, Chad VanGaalén is well known for rarely leaving his basement in Calgary, endlessly drawing, recording and making art. Fortunately, he has an uncanny knack for creating music that is sweepingly beautiful and undeniably genuine, and with his third full-length *Soft Airplane*, this celebrated multi-talented artist has created his most complete album to date.

With *Infiniheart* (Flemish Eye, 2005) and *Skelliconnection* (Flemish Eye, 2006), Chad displayed an innate understanding of simple pop melody and a penchant for intellectually playful arrangements. Compiled from years of hidden back-catalogue and lo-fi CD-R releases, both albums went on to receive critical acclaim from across the globe. While his first albums hinted at musical reference points (that even Chad seemed to be reluctant to embrace), *Soft Airplane* reveals an artist utterly in stride – confident enough to span genres, while working with a determined and deliberate focus.

Freed somehow from expectations or restrictions, Chad's musical expression seems both focused and unfettered. While elements might recall Neil Young (*On The Beach*), touch upon Sonic Youth (*Sister*) or even evoke the electronic meanderings of Raymond Scott, *Soft Airplane* manages to soar above musical reference points. The songs trace stories of birth and death, reflecting changes in his life over the two years since *Skelliconnection*, and cocoon the listener in a distinctive and unique world. Layered with a lush and complex mix of found sounds, vibraphone, corrupted synthesizers and drum machines, accordions, cello, clarinet, guitars and many others, *Soft Airplane* remains spacious and surges with pop-informed sophistication despite its lo-fi recording origins.

"Willow Tree", the album opener, showcases Chad's seemingly wise and fearless understanding of death amidst sweet banjo rhythms, swells of accordions, and resonating vibraphone; from first listen, the song captures the overwhelmingly passionate human spirit that defines *Soft Airplane*. In "Bones of Man" and "Bare Feet on Wet GripTape", Chad pays tribute to the slack vocal styling of Thurston Moore, while on "Molten Light" or "Rabid Bits of Time" his voice trembles with his distinctive vulnerability. When electronic experimentation comes into play on "Phantom Anthills" and "TMNT Mask", Chad toys with literate quasi dance-pop songs, but in characteristic irreverence with broken glitches from circuit-bent toys recorded to old tape machines. In fact, "Cries of the Dead" debuts a mechanical drum machine of Chad's own design, a handmade robotic device that strikes out an awkwardly fallible and surprisingly human rhythm.

As *Soft Airplane* closes, Chad allows the fragile, ascending, "Rabid Bits of Time" to greet the thunderous synth spasms of "Frozen Energon" through the stereo field-recordings of a passing freight train, and a psychedelic nightmare suited to cartoonist Jim Woodring brings the album to a shuddering halt. Sometimes the most powerful of musical expressions come from the most hushed and unassuming sources; with *Soft Airplane*, Chad Vangaalen has created one of these rare, heartfelt and gripping moments from the depths of his cluttered basement. Fortunately for him - and us.



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