

By Patrick Ferrucci

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For most of us, revisiting a set of home movies from our childhood would result in a case of embarrassment. Dave Einmo heard music. The guitarist stumbled upon a box of Super 8 videos chronicling his childhood in the late '70s and early '80s, and those films became the source material for "Random Portraits of the Home Movie," a 15-track electronic experiment brimming with beat-laden pop songs.

"I was working on a soundtrack for a film," recalls Einmo, who records under the moniker Head Like A Kite, but is also the guitarist for Sushirobo, "and I was enjoying the process of making songs that sync up with visuals. It made me want to create an album that was visual. So when I was over at my parents' house and found these videos, it dawned on me what a treasure all this was. My dad shot them, and he not only captured the film, but also the audio."

But those Super 8 videos weren't just the inspiration for "Random Portraits," they were the backbone of the record, which was released in February of 2006. You see, most of the synthesizer-like sounds forming the bright instrumental portion of the songs are those same Super 8 films, just processed through guitars,

effect pedals and synthesizers. Oh sure some of his dad's speeches make their way onto the disc unfettered, but even the most astute listener would have a hard time believing that a lead keyboard riff is really the sound of some kids playing outside in the '80s.

"I mean, yeah, it's a pretty far step," says Einmo during a recent phone conversation from his Seattle apartment. "to take the sound of my dad on the coast of Florida and making it a song. When I

was first watching the films, there were certain clips that were full of beautiful colors and the sounds were so good. So I started manipulating the audio, so the sounds didn't even sound like ambient chatter. The stuff where my dad's talking, I could run it through a phaser or synthesizer and it sounds like a weird instrument.

"I don't approach songwriting like a lot of people, where they'll sit down with a guitar or piano and come up with parts. I approach the music like a DJ and come up with different parts and I start looping something till it's something else. That's more interesting for me. I've been in regular bands, but it becomes too predictable. It's an opportunity for me to put my flavor on the songwriting. I love listening to electronic music and instrumental DJ stuff. I wanted to do something like that."

"Random Portraits" is certainly electronica, but the record is full of pop songs. Einmo's history of playing in traditional bands certainly infuses the album with a rock sensibility, the idea that a tune needs a catchy melody and a robust chorus. And the videos that make up the bulk of sounds heard on the disc also play a major part in Head Like A Kite's live show, which features Einmo playing guitars and synthesizers and Trent Moorman playing drums and synthesizers. While on stage, a projection screen shows the video that inspired a particular song.

"Video will always be a part of our live show," says Einmo. "It adds so much to the event. This isn't a typical band and we don't want a typical live experience. It's just the two of us, so this makes it different. Plus, a lot of DJs have clips playing when they perform, and that's kind of what we're going for here."

And while those videos help illustrate the song, there's only a finite amount of them, which could have made it difficult for Einmo to write another Head Like A Kite album. The songwriter knew this, so when he first went on tour for "Random Portraits," he brought a field recorder and decided the next disc would be formed with sounds he collects from all over the country.

"With 'Random Portraits,' having film and audio together, while I was working on songs, the things I saw on screen would inspire me. With the field recordings, I can't help but have memories of what happened, like the last time when we played Cafe Nine. That's when, on the corner near Cafe Nine, a security guard in a Camaro screeched his tires. When I heard that on the field recording, it couldn't help but inspire me and bring back memories. So there will probably be some New Haven on the next record."

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Seeing Head Like A Kite in concert is like attending a multi-media presentation, one with music and film heightening your enjoyment. Dan Tyler

# Head of the

# Class

Childhood becomes inspiration to fly kite

