

ePop 030:
Northern
Spies



EardrumsPop is a label where we release free digital singles of our favourite artists. In addition to the original tracks, the singles usually also include a cover-song that deserves more attention. The cover art will be made by our favourite illustrators, and we like to see the single as a split-release between the band and the illustrator.

The singles will vary in style, from acoustic folk-songs to noisy indiepop, everything in between and more, but always warm and melodic.

Tracks:

1. My Middle Names
2. 2 a.m
3. Kid Sister
4. The Girl Who Wants It All
5. Enda Vägen Ut (*The Smittens cover*)
6. Let's Whisper - My Middle Names (*Northern Spies cover*)
7. Colin Clary - The Girl Who Wants It All (*Northern Spies cover*)

»» *All songs written and performed by Astrid Wiezell Howell/Northern Spies apart from Enda Vägen Ut, translated into Swedish by Astrid Wiezell Howell/Northern Spies from the original song First Bus written by The Smittens. Track 1 and 5 produced by Astrid Wiezell Howell/Northern Spies. Bass and production on track 2, 3 and 4 by Jonathan Howell. Track 6 performed and recorded by Colin Clary and Dana Kaplan (Let's Whisper). Track 7 performed and recorded by Colin Clary.*

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Introduction to the band:

Northern Spies is 26-year-old Astrid Wiezell Howell singing and playing guitar, piano or whatever she feels like, based in Stockholm, Sweden. Northern Spies came about after the summer of 2012 being glorious and wonderful and wanting to write about the people and things around me and how happy they make me. Using a new name also provided a fresh start after years of solo, self-titled songwriting. Northern Spies fulfills its purpose if it can hit the mark somewhere between dreamy and honest and make the listener go “Oh! I know that feeling!”.

www.facebook.com/northernspies

And a little extra...

The Northern Spies cover band: Let's Whisper

With Northern Spies covering The Smittens, we were overjoyed by two members of the fantastic band covering Northern Spies... (And another Smittens member making the cover art, you can read more about David Zacharis on page 4). Colin Clary and Dana Kaplan are also known as Let's Whisper, and they've kindly contributed with two sweeter than apple pie songs.

<http://www.letswhisper.com/>



The cover art designer: David Zacharis

David calls himself a wide-eyed idealist that believes a pop song can change the world. In his drawings he tries to create a world that reflects this view. You may recognise the striking drawing style of the Northern Spies release from The Smittens' albums. David makes their cover art and plays in the band too!

»» David, can you give us a short presentation of yourself and your art?

I would like to think that I draw images that would live in the world that Jonathan Richman paints with his music. Most of the work that I am most proud of has been for my band The Smittens. For The Smittens I have mixed illustration with creations made of clay and felt. My friend Ted refers to it as Craftic Design.

»» What are you working on right now?

Right now, I am working on a poster for my nephew. I do I have a couple of Smittens related projects that I am working on. And I always have a graphic novel that I am working on, but don't we all?

»» What are your favourite tools?

Canson 8.5x5.5 Inch black sketchbook, Palomino Blackwing 602 and Adobe Illustrator.

»» Please tell us about the process of making the EardrumsPop-cover! Is this the way you usually work?

It came naturally out of a conversation between Astrid and I. It was really an easy project for me and a pleasure to work on.

Read the rest of the interview here:

<http://www.eardrumspop.com/?p=3175>



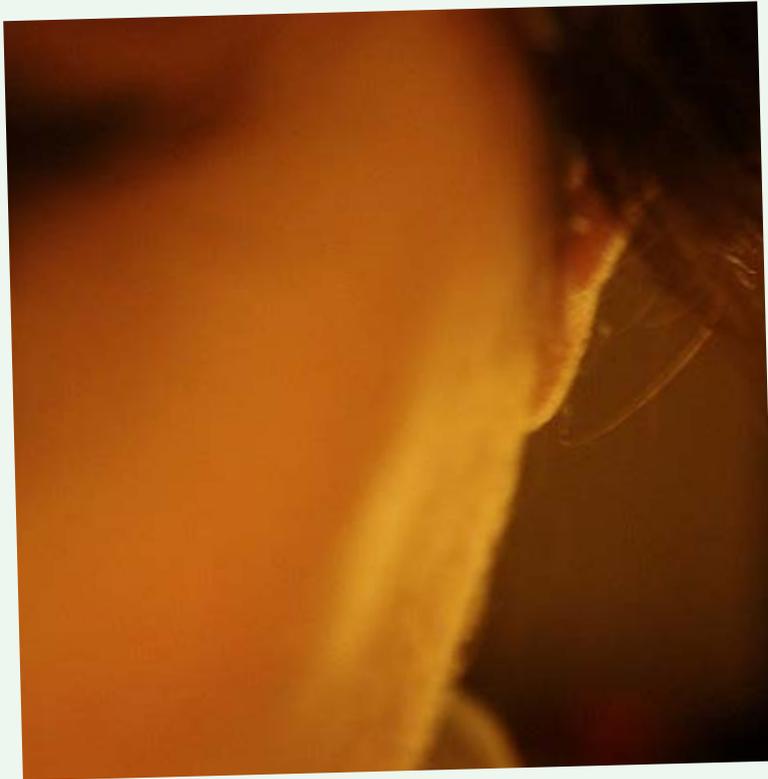
More of David's work here:

www.smittens.com

www.boyishcharms.com

Northern Spies — a photo interview:

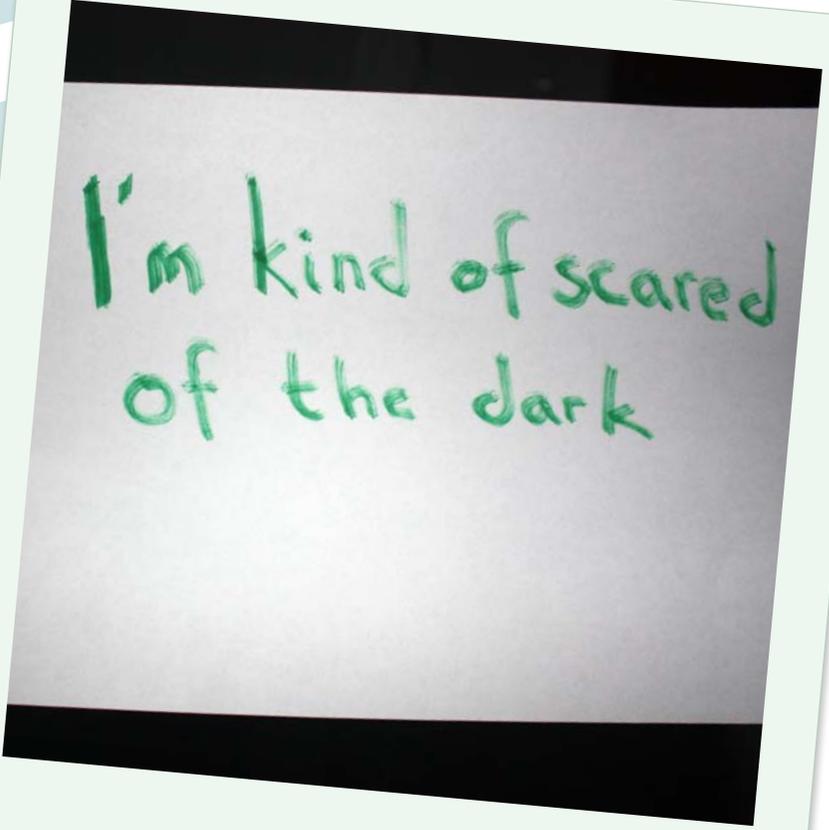
The innovative website [A Negative Narrative](http://AnegativeNarrative.com) has made photo-interviews with our single-artists. Visit www.anegativenarrative.com and see more bands' photographic answers to their interview questions.



- 1) Take a photo of an ear, but make it real strange, artistic or unrecognisable.



- 2) What's the most precious thing you'd smash up or break just for the purpose of taking a photo of it all broken and smashed for this interview?



I'm kind of scared
of the dark

3) Tell us a secret.



Happiness

4) What does life mean to you?



5) Show us your songwriting lair.



6) How about a really colourful photograph?



7) Photograph someone who isn't expecting it.



8) What would your music look like if it was visible to the human eye?



9) What makes you really, really, stupidly happy?



10) Photograph something illegal or naked.

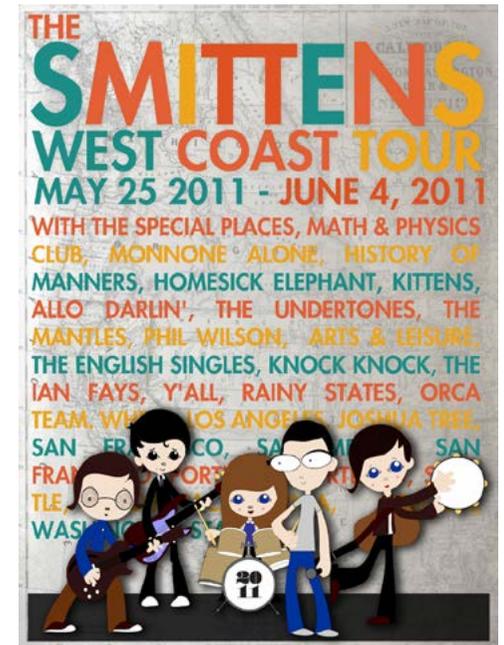
The cover song:

We have encouraged the single-bands to make a cover version of a song they think deserve more attention. Northern Spies has chosen to cover “First Bus”, originally performed by The Smittens.

Listen to/buy the original here:

<http://smittens.fikarecordings.com/track/first-bus>

More from The Smittens: <http://www.smittens.com>



Poster by David Zacharis

Why I chose to cover The Smittens (In Northern Spies' own words)

The Smittens are well established as Vermont's finest indiepop band with four albums and ten years behind them but I still feel they're underrated and deserve more attention. For me, it was love at first song. They are one of my hero bands because their songs really feel like the embodiment of the indiepop ethos I love and feel passionately for. Their songs are so clever and moving. I'm lucky enough to call them my friends too and their music has accompanied the last couple of years of my life perfectly, from soundtracking roadtrips and walks to work to being the processional music and first dance at my wedding. I love their vocal dynamic and the different voices playing off each other together with beautiful harmonies and just really great, catchy songs that make you forget a bad day or will enhance your good one.

Their songs perfectly capture life, the big and the small stuff, and they're just as likely to make me laugh as they are to make me cry (and have done both on plenty of occasions). First Bus is one of my favourite songs off their latest, gorgeous album Believe Me (out on Fika Recordings) and I decided to translate the lyrics and sing it in my native language Swedish as a challenge. I'd been thinking of covering it since this summer when for some reason I translated a few lines in my head while listening to it and realised it worked quite nicely. I'd never recorded or even ,officially' sung anything in Swedish before so it was a strange but pretty fun experience - getting the lyrics to work was a huge challenge I hope I solved!

Make sure to check out their records! You won't know what hit you!

About EardrumsPop, the label:

EardrumsPop is a digital music- and art-label. We love warm and melodic music of all kinds, we believe in beautiful things you can see and hear, and we believe in working together, helping each other and getting good music and good art out to the public.

We HOPE that instead of supporting us, you can visit the websites of the bands you like, buy their releases, go to their concerts or just spread the word about these wonderful bands. All our releases are made in close collaboration with the artists and illustrators.

www.eardrumspop.com

Contributors to the project:

- »» The **project** is run and managed by the EardrumsPop-team, Stefan, Silja, Tim and Knut. Visit us at www.eardrumspop.com.
- »» The **booklet-template** is designed by Julia Pax. Visit Julia at www.visuellezeiten.de. You can also read our interview with her at www.eardrumspop.com/about-2/our-illustrators/julia-pax.
- »» The **booklet** is put together in Adobe InDesign by Silja Haddal Mork (www.behance.net/Siljahm).
- »» The **text** in the booklet is put together by the EardrumsPop team.
- »» The **photo-interviews** are managed by the website A Negative Narrative www.anegativenarrative.com.

If you want to participate in any way, either with music, art or help us with the project, please contact us at team@eardrumspop.com. You can also join our Facebook group: www.facebook.com/eardrumspop.

Next singles in this series:

» ePop031: Jacob Borshard & Laura K

» And more great releases are being planned for 2013!

If you enjoyed the single, please tell your friends about it! Write about it in your blog, on Facebook, Twitter, Last.fm etc. Play it on your radio show, your podcast or as loud as you can on your stereo with your windows open. Spread the word about the single and help us let lots of people hear it!

You can help us develop the label, pay some bills for us or buy us a beer, by donating a small sum via our PayPal (www.eardrumspop.com/donate/).

Thank you!