

# CLOUD CULT

Nominated 2004 Artist of the Year along with Prince and Paul Westerberg by the Minnesota Music Awards, it's obvious that **Cloud Cult's** music inspires and connects with people on a deeply personal level. When their 2004 release **Aurora Borealis** began to surpass major label artists like Radiohead on college radio station charts, backed by only a small grass roots marketing campaign, the band's appeal was clear. And with over 2,000 copies of their upcoming record **Advice from the Happy Hippopotamus** already pre-sold through an independent label, the attraction is undeniable.

With lyrics that touch on universal themes like life, death, and the meaning of it all and singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist **Craig Minowa's** candid and organic delivery, it's easy to see why fans are quickly connecting with Cloud Cult's music. On the band's fourth album, *Advice from the Happy Hippopotamus* (to be released on **Earthology Records** on June 7<sup>th</sup>), fans will find a more ornate sound that alternates from lush orchestration, to electric guitars and crunchy percussion, to quiet and compelling acoustic tracks.

What has inspired much of Minowa's writing over the past three years has unfortunately stemmed from tragedy. In February of 2002, his two year old son Kaidin unexpectedly passed away in the middle of the night. Minowa and his wife split up shortly after that, due to the intense emotions of the loss. Kaidin's death obviously had a huge impact on Minowa's life and has left an indelible mark on his music, as Minowa has written and released four successful albums in less than two years.

"*They Live on the Sun* (2003) was a desperate attempt at staying sane when my son first passed away," says Minowa. "*Aurora Borealis* (2004) was an effort to reach out to him, wherever he may be. And *Advice from the Happy Hippopotamus* is an attempt at accepting what happened and allowing him to motivate me into really truly embracing life and living each day to its fullest. This album is a celebration of life and looks to enrich the everyday living experience by understanding that there are no guarantees."

Proving that last statement all too true, Minowa was forced to delay the original April release date of *...Happy Hippopotamus* and supporting tour dates for an unexpected hospitalization due to a rare spinal nerve disease, but a full U.S. tour and radio

campaign are now scheduled for the summer with follow-up releases in Europe and Australia on **Baria Records**.

The band's last album was such a success with radio that it will be no surprise to see their new release take off as well. *Aurora Borealis* debuted at an impressive **#2 Most Added** in 2003, hit **#19 on the CMJ Top 200** and **#18 on AAA charts** and landed in the top 10 of college radio charts in over 100 cities.



Several record label offers followed the success of *Aurora Borealis*, but no label was able to produce the environmentally friendly packaging to which the band is committed, so they chose to continue releasing CDs through their own label Earthology Records but picked up national distribution through **Innovative Distribution Network**.

Minowa says the band's politics and environmental activism are an important part of their identity but that the music is accessible to people anywhere on the political spectrum. "For the most part, I try to keep blatant politicizing out of the lyrical content," he explains. "I'd rather focus on demonstrating our ecological creed and forgo the preaching by building a successful ecological business model that others in the music industry can learn from."

As Minowa's efforts as both a musician and environmentalist flourish it seems he's found his niche. In addition to enjoying nationwide media exposure for his music, Minowa's environmental work has been receiving coverage everywhere from **National Geographic** to **The New York Times**. He has also been serving as an Official Advisor to the United Nations on environmental issues.

These elements are also incorporated into Cloud Cult's live show, which have become multi-layered events. Many shows include tabling and educational materials from various nonprofits, a gallery of activist art, and of course Cloud Cult's unique performances. In addition to the live music, a background screen flashes dreamlike sequences of images, and performance artists and dancers interact with the music and the audience making for some unpredictable moments. Minowa says, "I like providing concert goers with the unexpected. Life is short, so let's make it interesting."

## About Earthology Records

Earthology Records was established in 1997 by Cloud Cult's singer/songwriter Craig Minowa and is the world's only environmental nonprofit record label, donating all profits after expenses to environmental charity work. Located on a small organic farm in northern Minnesota and powered by geothermal and wind energy, Earthology packages CDs using hand-cleaned reused jewel cases, which are donated by the box load from all over the country, recycled cardboard and paper, and nontoxic soy ink. Earthology also houses a recording studio, built by Minowa from recycled and salvaged materials, in which all Cloud Cult albums are recorded.

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Label: Earthology Records  
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## Press

"*They Live on the Sun* is a sweeping indie epic... It's Minowa's accomplished songcraft that make this album so rewarding, even as it swells to encompass straight-ahead indie rock, freeform abstraction, cacophonous tear-jerkers, and samples from 1950s General Motors movies... Records this casually monumental are rare indeed." – **Pitchfork**

"Confident, mature, honest, inventive, eclectic, and unremittingly catchy: Minowa's fourth release deserves all the adjectives befitting a classic album. Genius. Sincerely groundbreaking indie rock."

– **PopMatters.com**

"A solar flare. Stunning. Two-minute excursions into sonic radiance that keep your brain whirring for days."

– **City Pages (MN)**

"Cloud Cult is taking environmental activism to new forms, from the way they package their CDs, to the flyers they distribute at concerts." – **National Public Radio**

"A Cloud Cult show is an aura. You go for the music, but you come out wanting to save the world." – **Dallas Observer**

"Cloud Cult earned its coolness long ago with its wispy, yearning indie rock sound."

– **Duluth News Tribune**

"This music deserves to be on major movie soundtracks."

– **D'Pressed International (London, UK)**

"*Aurora Borealis*, is an original musical statement, varied and impossible to pin down... The songs are united by emotional impact; by an almost Guided By Voices-like willingness to pick up a thousand different weird ideas and run with them; and by clean, clear melodic lines in front of excitingly busy rhythm tracks." – **Pulse (MN)**

Nominated "2004 Artist of the Year" by **MN Music Awards**, along with Prince and Paul Westerberg.

*Aurora Borealis* rated one of the best MN albums of 2004 by **Minneapolis Star and Tribune**.



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