

SLIDER

Matt Winegar - vocals/guitar

Josh Freese - drums

Zak Schaffer - bass

Few recordings darkening doorsteps these days cast the kind of aural effect that lingers long after a first listen. In the case of Slider, the effect is immediate. Anyone with ears can recognize that this is a great pop album. But its uncanny ability to get richer over time, rather than play itself out, is what puts this San Francisco/LA band's music in the ranks of the Kinks and the Replacements. It's the twist of a lyric here, the seemingly seamless hook there that makes the music alarmingly fresh.

Slider is Josh Freese, who handled all drums and cymbals and Matt Winegar, who took care of vocals, guitar, and bass on **SUDDEN FUN**. Fellow San Franciscan Zak Schaffer has been recruited for bass duties on the road.

And to think it all started in Fremont, CA where Winegar (who now lives in San Francisco) owned an 8-track recording machine in his teens and produced demos for his friends. His friends included Primus, and he ended up co-producing Primus' first album when he was 18, which also led to him to co-producing Primus' Caroline debut.

Armed with a Los Angeles based publishing deal affording him studio time, and small royalties from his work with Primus, Winegar decided on a change of venue. "I played guitar in a band for a couple of years and I was frustrated that I wasn't able to sing and write my own songs," says Winegar. "I wanted to have my own band."

Winegar gathered up his change, literally, and moved to Hollywood in the summer of '94. "I moved into this piece of shit apartment in the worst heat of summer with no air conditioning." Located directly across the street from the Scientology Entertainment Center, the Carlotta apartment complex and Los Angeles proved to be the inspiration for a number of songs found on Slider's debut. Producer Matt Wallace heard the demo and not only urged Los Angeles drummer Josh Freese to give it a listen but played it for A&M's Jim Phelan, who ultimately signed the group.

Produced by Winegar and David Bianco, a former engineer for Rick Rubin whose production credits include Teenage Fanclub and Frank Black, **SUDDEN FUN** is inarguably a remarkable debut. The band describes it as loud, distorted pop songs. The lyrics smack of brilliance, really: an uncanny ability to relay visual emotions while using as few words as possible. "At the time I really needed a release," explains lyricist Winegar, "I Had broken up with my girlfriend, left my home and was living in a place where I wasn't

very happy." Despite discouragement from publishers, that he couldn't just simply march down to Los Angeles and get a record deal, he did just that.

Matt Wallace had told Winegar about this excellent, young drummer named Josh Freese and tried to hook them up. The day Wallace was supposed to bring a tape over to play for Freese, a drum tech Freese had worked with called him up and said: "Man, you gotta meet my friends and jam with them," says Freese, who had drummed for the Vandals and Paul Westerberg, as well as recorded with Julianna Hatfield and Devo. 'As much as I love the guy, I was just totally blowing them off. He said, 'They're called Slider...blah blah blah.' I was trying to get him off the phone."

Later that day, Matt Wallace dropped by to play "the project" he wanted Freese to hear. "Immediately I went Yeah. Yeah. I want to be part of this," says Freese. "I asked the name and he said Slider. I just freaked out 'cause two hours earlier my knucklehead buddy had said the same thing." "I thought to myself, 'I wouldn't have to make excuses in this band,'" Freese says. "They had the elements of the Replacements, the Pixies, the Buzzcocks--all my favorite bands."

After jamming informally together for about a month, Winegar invited Freese to tag along on a "free lunch"--which turned out to be with the heads of A&M--who eventually offered them a record deal. Thankfully, you're the recipient of this bit of industry wisdom, which you'll understand after taking the time to listen to **SUDDEN FUN**'s 11 tracks.

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