

Pretend I'm a Genius - Biography

Pretend I'm a Genius has recently completed an album of original songs that reflect their alt-rock, indie roots. This album, *Float on Black*, was recorded at NightSound Studios in Carrboro, NC and Rubber Room Studios in Chapel Hill, NC. *Float on Black* contains ten songs composed individually and collaboratively by all three members of the band. The band has been a consistent presence on the Chapel Hill/Carrboro music scene since 2015 and plans to expand their gig circuit to include more local music festivals and showcases.

With all three members of the band writing and shaping the material, the Pretend I'm a Genius catalog is notable for its varied mix of songs. Members Mark Foley (drums), Scott Mathias (guitar) and Kelly Peak (bass guitar) bring differing, yet compatible, life experiences to the table and provide three distinct voices to their music. Some of the songs on *Float on Black* are real life amusing, like "Country Club," sung by Foley about funny experiences from his dating life. When Mathias takes the mic, the music can be upbeat ("Knowing the Way") or bluesy ("Concrete"), with lyrics tending towards introspection and a touch of melancholy. Peak's songwriting tends to more heartfelt with sometimes quirky themes inspired by fantasy and science fiction, like "45 Feet" (Alice in Wonderland) and "QuinJet Blues" (The Avengers). The title track (with vocals and lyrics by Peak and music by Mathias) was inspired by Peak's actual nightmare of escaping from a space battle to land on an unknown planet. Through it all, the band's devotion to elevating each member's creative vision shines through in a tightly-integrated, power-trio sound.

The history of Pretend I'm a Genius goes back to 2006, when Foley moved to Chapel Hill from California and almost immediately placed an ad seeking bandmates for a new project. Peak, already a guitar player, was one of the first musicians to respond. She eventually became the bass player in that band, which would go on to play mostly cover songs, gigging here and there around the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area. The cover band eventually transitioned into a trio playing original music (Moonfisher), most of it written and sung by Foley and Peak. After Moonfisher ended in 2010, Foley and Peak played separately in other local bands (Better Off Dead, Mangosteen, New Colonies and Push) until 2015, when they decided to co-found a new band together. After auditioning multiple guitarists, the two were pleased to be joined by Mathias, at that time also a member of the acoustic Rose Gray Band. By 2018, the band amassed a portfolio of over 30 original songs and continues to write and perform new material.

Live performances by Pretend I'm a Genius have been well-attended events at venues including the The Cave, The Kraken, Local 506 and Mystery Brewing. The band performed at the Carrboro Music Festival in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Although mostly-known for their driving, alt-rock sound, the band has also created acoustic versions of some core songs. Fans of these acoustic sets have appreciated the clarity of vocal harmonies and more intimate overall sound. In either type of show, Pretend I'm a Genius provides opportunities for listeners to dance and enjoy their time together. The band's goals are to bring their live act to more local stages, to support their music community and to entertain and inspire more people.