

Don't be lazy and call this surf music. Kioea is so much more than that. Sure, the format is there: guitar, bass, and drums. And Carand Burnet's guitar playing owes a *little bit* to the sound of The Ventures, Dick Dale, and the 90's Canadian daredevils of the form, Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet. But her singular voice owes just as much to that of Sonny Rollins - lost in the madness of a late 1950's session for Riverside. It's that departure Kioea offers. A trip, a stroll, the creation of a new world. One that begs you to revisit. Because you'll hear stuff the second, third, fourth time around that you missed at first. And to be clear, the first visit to *Stand Tall* is special.

Kioea are much more capable and confident than on the very fine self-titled EP which was released in 2022. They seemed to be searching a bit on that first record. I think *Stand Tall* is what they were looking for.

Much to their credit, the others in the band, Ian Decelli (bass), and Jake Remignanti (drums) capably accompany Carand Burnet's guitarscape-making. There's no posturing, soloing, redirecting from this rhythm section. This is a showcase for the guitar and the band provides the solid canvas it demands.

When she's not making music Burnet travels the country with her fine-art partner conducting large format printmaking workshops. Like the printmaking the format here is large. Massive. But these are more like aural *paintings*. Consider "Angel Lake," Burnet's guitar lunges forward with broad swaths of color, recoils into tiny textured moments and revisits the theme anew, the whole time we are in tow, enjoying the ride. The solo on "Cait's Song" is inspired, gentle but powerful. It's that gentle power that makes Kioea so special. They're not going to hit you over the head with it. They set out a little picnic and it's there for you to enjoy.

Also check out "Alvarado" Burnet takes a bath in reverb. Her intricate figures tickle your neck, she's got you by the collar and won't let go. The wah-wah pedal comes in, tasteful, sparing, (sorry high school guitar heroes, she's not going to abuse it). And by the time the power chords take over about halfway through the track you're unconsciously rocking, "what am I doing?" you ask, "I thought I could take care of a few things while listening to this music." Nope, you're in another place now and you're not coming back until the record is over. Give Kioea a bit of your time, they deserve it and so do you.

Doyle Dean, host of The Dean's List, Mondays 3-5pm on North Country Public Radio