



JULY 14, 2011 • VOL. 47 ISSUE 28

16

JULY 14-20, 2011

MUSIC

# Twilight time

Bedroom-pop gets dreamy



**Washed Out**  
Within And Without  
Sub Pop  
**Grade: B**



One measure of an uncertain economy might be the number of artists who have been finding big audiences while building beats in their parents' basements.

Washed Out, a.k.a. Ernest Greene, has two solid EPs to his name, and he supplied IFC's *Portlandia* with its theme song. But he's just now clambering out of the

first full-length, *Within And Without*. While *High Times* had a lo-fi charm, and *Life Of Leisure* specialized in the kind of refracted synth-pop and acid-damaged patter that Toro Y Moi and Neon Indian traffic in, *Within And Without* feels designed more for meditation than dance moves. The album's

freshly scrubbed beats bump insistently but gently against Greene's gauzy vocals and the occasional string interlude. Overall, the tracks are longer and the sound more unified, making Washed Out's Sub Pop debut more soporific than psychotropic.

That isn't necessarily a bad thing, it just means that *Within And Without* is more of an ambient-leaning record. This is best exemplified by the title track, which evokes Slowdive with its smeary, shoegaze-y synths and noncommittal singing. If Washed Out's crunchier inclinations are gone, it might have something to do with producer Ben Allen, who helped supply Deerhunter and Animal Collective with their most polished albums to date. And while there's some occasional backsliding into the drowsier sounds of the '80s with "Echoes" and "You And I," the line connecting Washed Out's scuffed-up and sleepy incarnations wasn't that long to begin with. —Christian Williams