

MUSICSHORTS



Lost in the Trees  
Past Life

★★★★★

Alt Rock

Ari Picker, leader of Lost in the Trees, is a virtuoso at beautifully weaving his sad and tragic past into his band's varying shades of majestic music. On the band's third LP, *Past Life*, Picker and crew interject vulnerable sentiment similar to previous albums, but this time with a different, progressive lens.

The band's previous record, the enthralling *A Church That Fits Our Needs*, served as a bittersweet tribute to Picker's deceased mother who took who her own life shortly after Picker's wedding years ago.

*Past Life* carries the same weight, but instead of pure and heartfelt reflection, the classically trained Picker substitutes orchestra strings for more upbeat drums and electric guitars to mold Picker's transition of moving on with the memory of the past still vibrantly presence.

Lost in the Trees' emotion is still there with haunting harmonies in "Excuse" and "Rites," opening up a misty transitional space for the album to meditate on a previous life while contemplating a potential afterlife. But the band's mood is different this time. While Picker's elegance is always warming, *Past Life* does not carry this warmth as seamlessly as previous works.

Nevertheless, songs like the title track, the lilting and ambient "Glass Harp," and the optimistic "Sun" bring a revered symmetry to the album's journey.

*Past Life* is a step to the side from Lost in the Trees history rooted in grieving celebration. It welcomes all that comes with such a sentiment-

tal background, but is willing to explore new territory, and new emotions.

— Charlie Shelton



Xiu Xiu  
Angel Guts: Red Classroom

★★★★★

Avant-garde

It's beginning to seem like Xiu Xiu has a new piece of music out every month, yet somehow the group manages to create fresh noise rock that very few others can imitate. The band's latest, the murky *Angel Guts: Red Classroom*, is more of the same, but something fans will immediately enjoy.

The eerie, industrial opener "Angel Guts" sets the tone

for the rest of the record. The instrumental track begins with a repetitive siren-like noise before fading into static and then nothing for the last minute and a half. It's not until "Archie's Fades," a bare dance number that distorted vocals and creepy lyrics come into play.

"New Life Immigration" is a standout, almost dead center in the album. Taking inspiration from contemporaries like Twin Shadow, the song is more emotional and heart-wrenching than any others.

Some of the later tracks blur together, becoming a hazy, dark mass of distorted vocals and strange beats. Maybe if the album was shorter than fourteen songs, the effect would be less noticeable, but as is, *Angel Guts* begins to wear the listener down.

While not a good introduction for the average listener, fans of Xiu Xiu will find a lot to like.

— Mac Gushanas

COLUMN

# A 'House of Cards' built upon a captivating marriage

Tomorrow marks the much-anticipated return of the Netflix original series "House of Cards." Save the saccharine kisses in the rain or "I got off the plane's" — such gestures are tiresome compared to what the characters of "House of Cards" has to offer.

Without a doubt, the show boasts the most compelling partnership on air: Claire and Frank Underwood.

Instances of infidelity and manipulation bar them from becoming the idyllic picture-perfect couple, but that's boring. You want to be Frank and/or Claire as much as you want to stay far, far out of their way.

In their professional lives, both Claire and Frank are ruthless. Frank cuts and weasels his way all the way to the vice presidency in season one of "House of Cards," while Claire runs her charity with an iron grip.

They're sharp and calculating, but are often more tender with each other in peculiar ways — like when Claire buys a rowing machine for a petulant Frank because she's worried about his heart.

When viewers see the pair, there are few if any typical affectionate exchanges. They



Allison Hussey  
Diversions Editor

interact much like business partners, and yet there's a consistent undercurrent of intimacy.

Kevin Spacey's Frank Underwood is as slick and cold as an ice luge. He has an affair with the young tenacious journalist Zoe Barnes (Kate Mara), but it's not a secret. Claire knows what's up, and isn't afraid to let Zoe know who's boss.

One episode late in season one also hinted that Frank had a male lover in the past, though it's not clear where or how Claire may come into play there.

Though Spacey is the star of the show, Robin Wright as Claire steals the spotlight whenever she's near it. She's not just your standard Strong Woman type: she's independent and interesting, but difficult. She's not exactly a nice person.

And yet, it's difficult not to feel bad for her as she tries to hide her impending meno-

pause from her husband.

Netflix has stayed tight-lipped about what's to come in the new season. Two trailers do little in the way of offering any substantial answers as to what this season will bring.

As Frank rises to power (and presumably continues his treacherous ways), Claire will be right at his side doing some climbing on her own.

It's a stretch to say that the Underwoods' relationship is refreshing because it seems realistic — a relationship like theirs in reality would more likely be horrifying. It seems almost as far-fetched as the lovey-dovey trope, but is infinitely more intoxicating.

As season one came to a close, the couple faced a myriad of issues that season two needs to address.

Will children be in the picture for the Underwoods? How will Claire handle the looming lawsuit from a former employee? Will Zoe try to wreck the Underwoods' marriage? How will Frank and Claire handle life in the vice president's seat?

There's a lot on the line for Claire and Frank as this next season kicks off. Will their relationship splinter under the many levels of deception,

"I don't know whether to be proud or terrified."

Frank Underwood,  
on his wife Claire in the trailer for the second season of House of Cards

or will they find that they need each other more than either?

The "House of Cards" writers will almost certainly handle these situations with a fantastic grace and deftness. It'll be quite a ride to see if the Underwoods come tumbling down.

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STARS

★ POOR  
★★ FAIR  
★★★ GOOD  
★★★★ EXCELLENT  
★★★★★ CLASSIC

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**Michael Geyer**

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**FEBRUARY**

14 FR: LAKE STREET DIVE (Sold out)  
15 SA: NC FRESH CATCH OYSTER TOUR: Big Fat Gap, The Dye Wells, Regatta 69, NC Songsmiths, Shannon O'Connor  
17 MO: RUSSIAN CIRCLES, Ken Mode, Inter Arma\*\* (\$13/\$15)  
18 TU: JONATHAN WILSON w/ The Blank Tapes\* (\$12/\$15)  
Feb 19: JOHN BROWN'S BODY w/ Lionize\*\* (\$12/\$15)  
FEB 21: WHITE LIES w/ Frankie Rose\*\* (\$20/\$23)  
FEB 22: WHO'S BAD\*\* (\$17/\$20) w/ Chit Nasty Band  
FEB 28: LOST IN THE TREES w/ All Tiny Creatures\*\* (\$15)

**MARCH**

1 SA: STEPHEN KELLOGG w/ Heather Morgan\*\* (\$18/\$20)  
MARCH 3: STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JACKS w/ Purling Hiss\* (\$19/\$22)  
March 4: MEWTHOUTYOU and Touche Amore w/ Seahaven and Caravels\*\* (\$15/\$17)  
MARCH 5: SHOVELS & ROPE\*\* (\$14/\$16)  
MARCH 6: DELTA RAE\*\* (\$20/\$25) w/ the Falls and Brett Harris  
FR 7: BROAD CITY LIVE\*\* (\$25) Presented by AEG Live  
March 9: THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART\*\* (\$12/\$14)  
March 11: GREEN RIVER ORDINANCE w/ Elenowen, Emily Heam\*\* (\$12/\$15)  
14 FR: DIALI CISSOHKO & KAIRA BA and Orquesta GarDel (\$10)  
15 SA: THE DIRTY GUV'NAHS w/ Cereus Bright\*\* (\$12/\$15)  
3/18: TYPHOON w/ PHOX, Wild Ones\*\* (\$12/\$14)  
3/19: RAC\*\* (\$15/\$17)  
March 20: TINARIWEN w/ The Melodic\*\* (\$23/\$25)  
21 FR: SAN FERMIN\*\* (\$12/\$14) w/ Avers  
22 SA: WXYC 90s Dance (\$5/\$7)  
March 26: OKKERVIL RIVER\*\* (\$16/\$18)  
29 SA: HOLY GHOST TENT REVIVAL\*\* (\$12/\$14)  
30 SU: AMERICAN AUTHORS\*\* (\$15)  
dMarch 31: G-EAZY\*\* (\$15/\$20)

**APRIL**

APRIL 1: BAYSIDE, Four Years Strong, Daylight\*\* (\$16.50/\$19)  
4/8: TWENTY-ONE PILOTS\*\* (\$20/\$25) w/ NoNoNo, Hunter Hunted  
4/12: DANNY BROWN\*\* (\$17/\$20; on sale 2/14)

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18 FR: THE ZOMBIES\*\* (\$32/\$35)  
April 22: SLAUGHTERHOUSE\*\* (\$22/\$25)  
April 23: TYCHO\*\* (\$15/\$17)

**MAY**

May 5: BEATS ANTIQUE\*\* (\$20/\$22)  
MAY 6, 14: HAIM (Sold out)  
10 SA: METRONOMY\*\* (\$15/\$17)d  
MAY 12: BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB\*\* (\$17/\$20)  
MAY 13: THE 1975 (Sold out)  
16 FR: ANGEL OLSEN \*\* (\$12/\$14)  
May 18: OF MONTREAL w/ DREAM TIGER\*\* (\$15)

**JUNE**

June 14: THE ENGLISH BEAT\*\* (\$18/\$20)

**MONDAY, FEB. 17  
RUSSIAN CIRCLES**

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19  
JOHN BROWN'S BODY**

**FRIDAY, FEB. 28  
LOST IN THE TREES**

**MONDAY, MARCH 3  
STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JACKS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19  
GARDENS & VILLA**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14  
DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS**

**INTO IT. OVER IT.**

**SATURDAY, FEB. 15  
INTO IT. OVER IT.**

**WE ARE ALSO PRESENTING...**

**CAT'S CRADLE -- BACK ROOM:**  
2/14: MAGNOLIA COLLECTIVE/ MICHAEL RANK & STAG\*\* (\$5)  
2/16: Cibo Matto\*\* (\$20) w/ Salt Cathedral  
2/19 GARDENS & VILLA\*\* (\$10/\$12) w/ Waterstrider  
2/21: Hiss Golden Messenger plays Bad Debt\*\* \$12 w/ Alex Sauser-Monnig  
2/22: Hospitality\*\* (\$10/\$12) w/ Air Waves  
2/25: Robert Ellis\*\* (\$10) w/ T Hardy Morris  
2/26: Caroline Smith\*\* (\$8/\$10) w/ Lowland Hum  
2/28: DYLAN LEBLANC & JOSH MOORE\*\* (\$10)  
3/1: JON SHAIN TRIO\*\* (\$10) w/ Anna Rose Beck  
3/6: Moonface (\$12)  
3/14: The Loudmilkies, Cousins, John Howie Jr.  
3/19: Rueben and the Dark, NO, The Darcys\*\* (\$8/\$10)  
3/20: Shearwater\*\* (\$10/\$12) w/ Death Vessel and Jesca Hoop  
3/21: Noah Gunderson\*\* (\$10/\$12) w/ Armon Jay  
3/28: I WAS TOTALLY DESTROYING IT w/ Blanco Basnet, & more  
3/29: BIRDS & ARROWS w/ Kelley McKee\*\* (\$8/\$10)  
4/2: EISLEY w/ Merriment\*\* (\$15; on sale 2/14)  
4/3: DEAN WAREHAM\*\* (\$15)  
4/5: Rhett Miller\*\* (\$15/\$18)  
4/9: SHAWN MULLINS w/ Max Gomez\*\* (\$20)  
4/21: Charlie Hunter & Scott Amendola\*\* (\$15)  
5/1: WAKE OWL (\$10)  
5/3: WAKEY! WAKEY! \*\* (\$10/\$12)  
5/9: TYRONE WELLS\*\* (\$15/\$17) w/ Nick Howard  
5/10: UNDERACHIEVERS w/ Denzel Curry and Dillon Curry\*\* (\$17; on sale 2/14)

**THE RITZ (RALEIGH):**  
March 14 FR DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS w/ Blitz'n Trapper\*\* (\$25/\$28)  
April 28: CHVRCHES\*\* (\$22/\$25)

**LOCAL 506 (CHAPEL HILL):**  
Feb 15: Into It, Over It. \*\* (\$10/\$12) w/ The World Is A Beautiful Place... A Great Big Pile Of Leaves, Bats & Mice  
MAY 11: Spirit Family Reunion\*\* (\$12)

**THE HAW RIVER BALLROOM:**  
March 4: ST VINCENT\*\* (\$22/\$25)  
March 5: FUTURE ISLANDS, WYE OAK\*\* (\$16/\$18) w/ Ed Shrader's Music Beat  
March 22: THE DUHKS\*\* (\$20/\$23)  
April 10: SUPERCHUNK\*\* (\$12/\$14)  
April 11: DANIEL ROSSEN (of Grizzly Bear) w/ William Tyler  
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