

## A Little Out of Whack in the Right Way: The Multiple Cat, June 14 at RIBCO

Written by Jeff Ignatius

Tuesday, 11 June 2013 07:35

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*The Return of the Multiple Cat* represents the first set of new material from Pat Stolley's band The Multiple Cat in a dozen years, but the man has hardly been slothful.

As a founder and a member of bands, Stolley was intimately involved in the Quad Cities-based Future Appletree label – active for half a decade starting in 2002. And from Daytrotter.com's beginning in 2006 to summer 2008, he was the Web site's primary recording engineer; he estimated he's logged roughly 800 Daytrotter sessions and still typically records between 12 and 24 a month.

That experience, he said last week, took a toll. "For a while there, I was so depressed about music in general because of having worked for Daytrotter and seeing the amazing amount of bands and stuff out there – how much noise there is out there. It makes you just want to pick up your toys and go home.

"But then there's this other thing: I don't really have a choice. I'm going to keep writing songs

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and recording them, whether anyone is going to listen to it or not.”

That’s what he did starting in 2009 with what became *The Return of the Multiple Cat*, “picking it up and putting it down,” he said. “I didn’t really know I was making a record.”

Eventually, he added, the songs he’d written and recorded “felt like they all kind of belonged together,” and they more resembled the Multiple Cat than his other primary songwriting outfit, the Marlboro Chorus: “This stuff was a little more synthesizer-based, a little proggy.”

Stolley played nearly all the instruments on the album – a half-dozen collaborators, including Daytrotter’s Sean Moeller, made contributions – but for his record-release show at RIBCO on June 14 and other live performances, he leads a four-piece band, playing what he called “an aggressive version of the record” front to back.

Stolley said that “I feel better about the record than almost anything I’ve ever done.” That is partly a result of the material gestating over a long period of time – of the breathing room he gave ideas.

“I think it’s a little more sophisticated,” he said. “I thought very carefully about it. Without working on anything or even listening to anything, I would think about it. ...

“When I would have an idea, I would think about it for a really long time before I would lay it down. That song ‘[The] Flood,’ I first came up with some of that song in maybe like 2000. So it took 11 years of thinking about how it would go together.”



There was also growth, he said, from recording so many breaking bands for Daytrotter. “For one thing, I really learned what I liked,” he said. “I think about *why* I liked it. When you do 30 [sessions] in a week, and one of them stands out, you’re ... noticing little things,” from guitar

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effects to pedal boards.

Bands passing through the Quad Cities for a session would also give him their albums. “I listen to everything that anyone ever gives me,” he said. “And 99 percent of the time, I listen to it and chuck it over my shoulder. It may be great, the band might have blown me away, the songs are really good, [but] the recording bored me to tears.” With the remainder, he said, he would ask: “Why do I like that? What do I like about it?”

Stolley said that what often attracts him to a recording is “a real bristling sort of energetic life. ... Things fitting together the right way, or not fitting together the right way. ... I think what I really like is odd sounds. ... Things being a little out of whack in the right way.” (He cited as examples Gotye’s “Somebody That I Used to Know” and Taylor Swift’s “I Knew You Were Trouble.” “I think it’s good for people to be forced to experience things they don’t really care for,” he said. “I do *not* listen to those on my own. But I hear them in my car.”)

On *The Return of the Multiple Cat*, he said, that fondness for oddness is clear on the lead track, “His Master’s Voice.” “The vocals are sort of jumping out almost too far,” he said. “There’s something about it that’s not polite. But it’s really just sort of a pop song.”

That track packs its weirdness into a little more than two minutes. At the other end is “The Flood,” a three-section piece clocking almost eight minutes and patient in developing its moods and arcs. The second part takes the song from luxuriant pop textures to cool, breathy melancholy, which segues into a measured joy: “Out among the statues, sparkling in the air / Everywhere the kingdom is you are there.”

Nothing else on *The Return of the Multiple Cat* is nearly as ambitious, but the care and attention to detail with which it’s been made are evident throughout its eight songs of artful pop – as alluring as it is subtly strange.

*The Multiple Cat* will perform a record-release show on Friday, June 14, at RIBCO (1815 Second Avenue, Rock Island; [RIBCO.com](http://RIBCO.com)). The 9 p.m. show also features Gloom Balloon, Brooks Strause, and Chrash. Cover is \$5.

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*For more information on the Multiple Cat – and to listen to or buy The Return of the Multiple Cat – visit*

[TheMultipleCat.Bandcamp.com](http://TheMultipleCat.Bandcamp.com)

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