

Spirits and the Melchizedek Children

Hometown: Atlanta

Album: *We Are Here To Save YOU!*

Members: Jason Elliott (vocals, guitar), Chris Case (keyboards), Joe McNeill (bass), Bryan Fielden (drums)

For Fans Of: *The Besnard Lakes, Deerhunter, Anna Calvi, Atlas Sound*

+ by Nathan Spicer +

When Jason Elliott was sitting alone in his bedroom, patiently playing his acoustic guitar, he heard more in his mind than the lonely strums bouncing off the walls; he heard something deeper, something stranger, darker and more layered, richer and more complex. Just *more*.

Spirits and the Melchizedek Children formed out of Elliott's necessity to release the sounds swimming in his head. With the help of five more Atlanta musicians, he built an ensemble of eclectic instruments to create a haunted, shoe-gaze, art-rock sound that retains some of Elliott's quieter folk productions.

"We really didn't want to emulate anyone else," says Elliott. "We all have our influences, but we wanted to make our own sound."

The band incorporates a heavy dose of electronic ambience and disparate inputs that manipulate the original instruments' production, building distinct and deep melodic layers on its newest album, *We Are Here To Save YOU!*.

"In essence, it's a concept record," says Elliott, "where you're waking with a 'Q 'n' A' and going throughout your day, and then finally wanting to go into the next day with 'Fly Away Feathers,' and that's your dream sequence."

Even in the hyper-digital age full of 99-cent single downloads, Spirits still hold a love of albums. "The single is great. I love pop songs... But I believe music is art, and an album should be a cohesive idea," says Elliott.

That cohesive idea is stitched together by simple skeletons. Elliott brings a stripped-down version of a song, and everyone else determines what they should add. "There's touchstones," says keyboardist Chris Case. "I wouldn't say there's a formula, but there are places we know we want to take the songs."

Those would be places to zone out and relax, adds Elliott. "I'm a fairly busy person, very high-strung with a stressful life," he says. "I like to create music to contradict that, smooth out any turmoil or turbulence that anyone might have, including ourselves."

Stress is combated not only by the overarching, grand psychedelic flows of Spirits, but by soft and subtle accents. Tracks contain tiny breaths, delicate acoustic strums, tape hiss and static that add an intimate feel to the spectacle. "I wanted a bigger sound but... really wanted to hear that pin drop," says Elliott. "I think life in general brings together quiet times and loud times, and I want to emulate that through music."