

left coast culture

# SOMA

## 4/02



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## THE BALDWIN BROTHERS

text Mark VonPfeiffer photo Alice Arnold

The gap between electric and electronic music is closing. Bands like Broadcast, Goldfrapp and The Avalanches are mounting daring attempts to hybrid the two previously separate but equal genres of sound. Not to say that flanger, phazer and fuzz pedals are going the way of parachute pants, but editing software like Sonic Foundry's Acid can put queer notions into the minds of budding musicians. Springing from the pendulant loins of Chicago, The Baldwin Brothers are poised to break the coconut wide open with their debut album, *Cooking with Lazars*.

out of there though—except for us, of course.”

Once the duo had dug themselves into Chicago's Wicker Park art scene, they added bassist Jimmy Deer and DJ JB Royal to the roster and a sonic orgy of sunderous proportions commenced. Originally slated to drop months ago, several tracks on their upcoming debut LP have since been revamped and spiked with actual human voices à la analog: “We were hesitant to add any vocals. Besides the obvious samples, we'd never used the human voice...or the voice of any other species for that matter.”

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Fifteen years in the making, it's the brainchild of Jason Hinkle, TJ Widner, Jimmy Deer and DJ JB Royal who are, even as I type, raising themselves up by their good taste and persistence from a warehouse in the city's Chinatown district—an area that makes the slums of Detroit look like a Girl Scout meeting. Hinkle's father was a musician and it was in jr. high that young Jason, already playing guitar and bass, invited the piano-playing TJ over to jam in the basement. “It was a playground,” sighs Widner. “Just about every instrument you could imagine...A reel-to-reel recorder, a drum machine. Paradise.” The duo went on to college together at Indiana University. “There was a thriving music scene. I don't know that any major bands have really come

However, when Miho Hatori from the seminal group Cibo Matto offered to lay some pipe on *Dream Girl*, the quartet gave thanks to various gods, sacrificed a goat, and got down to business. “Fortunately for us there was a relationship between Miho and our producer Dave Trumfio... Not a sexual relationship of course...”

Attempting to create an entirely new genre of music is no easy task, and the lads draw no distinction between a vintage 1978 Fender Rhodes Piano, an Epiphone B4 upright bass circa 1945, and Pioneer's ultra super duper CDJ-1000 digital turntable. “It's all sound; whether an instrument has a hard drive or not is irrelevant. If we're to be categorized, file us under Junktronic,” warns Widner. ■