

**The New Year****The New Year**

[Touch and Go; 2008]

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Style: indie rock, slowcore**Others:** Bedhead, Low, Calla**Links:** The New Year - Touch and Go

It's difficult for me to imagine anyone calling themselves fervent fans of Matt and Bubba Kadane. Languorous, wistful, and reflective fans — yes, but fervent? No. And yet, perhaps this is just me confusing mood with emotional resonance. Perhaps I, in fact, am one those fervent fans who also somehow believes that they don't exist. Maybe that disbelief is part of what draws me into the Kadane's intricately crafted songs, songs that always seem to end just short of fully taking off. They're like the hidden treasure that, while traveling in the right circles (on Touch & Go, recording with Steve Albini, etc.), always seem underappreciated, if not alarmingly ignored.

With their band The New Year, now together for longer than their earlier, more prolific band Bedhead, the Kadanes have released their third full-length, a self-titled release appreciated as the culmination of the Kadane's experience of playing together since childhood in Wichita Falls, TX. To the unconverted *The New Year* will probably come across as deliberately-paced, sparse, and hushed, but songs like "The Door Opens" and "The Idea of You" rocks with more fuzzy distortion and menacing tone than ever before. They gradually flirt with faster tempos and lush arrangements, yet this isn't a far departure from the last couple albums. Certainly nowhere near as glacial as their Bedhead material (or even their soundtrack for *Neil House*), the overriding atmosphere is one of contemplation and introspection, yearning to find peace amongst the complexities of contemporary life.

If there is a real departure contained in these lovely tracks, it's with the inclusion of piano, which adds an epic quality that wasn't present before. The brothers' music used to be more demure in posture, but here some of the quieter songs — "MMV," "The Company I Can Get," "Body and Soul" — have considerably more weight and substance. While always (and rightly) heralded for their intricate guitarwork, The New Year have matured into a sound more confident and less fragile — even the vocals seem to be increasingly sung rather than mumbled or spoken. It's tricky to balance it all, but the Kadanes pull it off like the veteran player/writers they have become.

1. Folios
2. The Company I Can Get
3. X Off Days
4. The Door Opens
5. MMV
6. Seven Days and Seven Night
7. Wages of Sleep
8. Body and Soul
9. My Neighborhood
10. The Idea of You

by **Dave Gurney**