

## NEWS

[Polvo's Ash Bowie Talks "Reformation"](#)

More U.S. dates added



*Photo by Ashley Worley*

As a member of [Polvo](#) and Helium, singer & guitarist Ash Bowie helped paint the indie rock landscape of the 1990s. Following over ten years of silence, Polvo [return](#) to the stage in May, but don't call it a reunion. Bowie prefers the word "reformation." He told us as much when he answered our questions over email.

In addition to clarifying terms, Bowie explained why former Cherry Valence drummer Brian Quast has replaced original Polvo drummer Eddie Watkins and gave us insight into the rehearsal process, the band's history, and the possibility of a new record.

**Pitchfork:** After a decade of inactivity, why has Polvo reunited now? Did the reunion come about purely as a result of being asked to play [Explosions in the Sky's ATP](#), or was this something you guys had thought about and discussed previously?

**Ash Bowie:** We never actually ruled out playing together again, but this was the first opportunity to do so when the timing seemed good for all of us and when we might realistically have enough time to get together and practice. We definitely wouldn't be doing this right now if Explosions in the Sky hadn't asked us to play. The ATP festival is something that we, as music fans, think is pretty cool, and we're definitely lucky to be a part of this one.

**Pitchfork:** Why is Brian Quast filling in for Eddie Watkins on drums? Is Eddie's relationship with the other members of the band strained in any way?

**AB:** Obviously, this is not the original band lineup doing a reunion. "Reformation" is probably a more accurate word. Therefore, no one is filling in for anyone. We consider Eddie a good friend who played a big part in the band's history, but after he amicably quit the band, we kept going with our friend Brian Walsby on drums, and this time around we felt that Brian Quast would be a great fit for us, stylistically. Both Eddie and Walsby were great to have in the band and are terrific drummers, and we aren't slighting either of them now by choosing to play with someone new in order to create something new.

Anyway, we're on fine terms with Walsby, who is now happily playing with Double Negative, and I think Eddie understands why we wanted to make a fresh start with yet another drummer, but of course I can't speak on his behalf.

**Pitchfork:** How are you guys getting along now as a group? Is this the first time you've seen each other in a while, or do you all keep in touch regularly?

**AB:** [Singer/guitarist] Dave [Brylawski], [bassist] Steve [Popson], and I have stayed pretty tight over the last ten years, so getting along is not a problem. Brian Quast has been a good friend to all of us for many years now and he's always fun to be around. Some of the band profiles and histories that people have written about us make it sound like we didn't get along, in addition to the usual inaccuracies regarding chronologies and other minor details, but that's not the case. For example, we didn't break up during our last tour; we said we were doing a last

tour and then went out and did it and had a good time. Anyway, we're still getting along fine.

**Pitchfork:** Have you had any practices for the upcoming shows? Does it feel familiar, or is it a new experience very much separated from the first go-round?

**AB:** The three of us who live in North Carolina are playing regularly, and then we get together with Dave about once a month for a long weekend practice session. Of course, we'd like to have a couple more full-band practices under our belt by the time we play our first show, but all in all I think we'll be okay. I'd say it's a mix of the familiar and the new. Some of the old songs we're playing have been changed pretty radically, others not so much. Of course, we're still mostly dealing with old material right now, but we're approaching it as an opportunity to weed out some stuff that hasn't aged well, and to add some new ideas so that it's not a by-the-numbers recreation. The whole process has been a lot of fun, actually.

**Pitchfork:** Is there any possibility of a new Polvo record?

**AB:** We've talked about recording something new as soon as we have enough material and can schedule it. Of course, I don't know what kind of stuff we'll be writing later or whether a new album would have an overall sound. I think we would do something more cohesive than our last record. I have no idea whether our new songs will remind anyone of the old ones. You really only know what it sounds like to you, and you get used to being surprised by other people's descriptions of it. Honestly, I don't think my own guitar-playing style and songwriting tendencies have really evolved much over the years, so maybe whatever I bring to it will provide some consistency amid the changes. Well, I'd like to think I play more tastefully, but of course that's a euphemism for becoming older and more boring. One thing is that all our previous records were made as quickly as possible, and I think now we would really try to make sure we're all happy with it before sending it in, or at least aspire to do that.

**Pitchfork:** Can you see Polvo's influence on current bands?

**AB:** I don't really look for it, to be honest. I think we've had an influence, but there are other reasons why people are often found doing similar things at the same time in music, art, design, or whatever. As far as other people incorporating your style into their work, of course you'll have mixed feelings about it, but it's probably best to remain ambivalent about it. Anyway, I've always been more into music that's completely different from Polvo, so I don't run across it much.

**Pitchfork:** On a semi-related note, is there any chance of a Helium reunion?

**AB:** As far as the original lineup, there's probably zero chance of a reunion, but I myself joined the band later. Well, that would be a fun project. Mary [Timony] and I also had our own band called Led Byrd that was supposed to do a record someday, so you never know.

Polvo:

05-09 Washington, DC - Black Cat

05-10 Carrboro, NC - Cat's Cradle

05-16-18 Minehead, England - Butlins Holiday Resort (Explosions in the Sky All Tomorrow's Parties)

05-29-31 Barcelona, Spain - Primavera Sound Festival (ATP stage)

06-20 Cambridge, MA - Middle East

06-21 New York, NY - Bowery Ballroom

07-25 Chicago, IL - Subterranean

➤ [Stream: Polvo: Feather of Forgiveness \[from the Exploded Drawing LP\]](#)