

# Music

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## On The Record

### Polvo

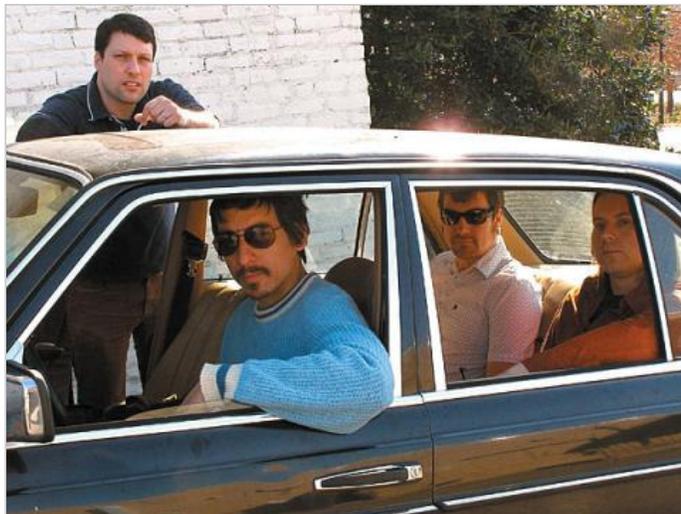


Photo: Ashley Worley

No one nailed down Polvo's sound better than its own record label, Touch and Go, which described its music as "guitar soundtracks to kung-fu movies." Ten years after its last tour, the North Carolina band—a cornerstone of '90s indie rock best known for its quirky tunings—has reunited for a run of dates. We got the lowdown from vocalist-guitarist Ash Bowie.

**Time Out Chicago:** You have one of the coolest names in indie rock. Is it real?

**Ash Bowie:** Bowie is a Scottish name, and it's my real name. Well, actually I'm the only Bowie. Everyone else pronounces it "Booey." My dad was the black sheep of the family; he pronounced it "Bowie." But all my cousins and uncles are "Booeyes." My first name is Ashley, which used to be a man's name in the days of *Gone with the Wind*.

**TOC:** Any plans beyond the reunion gigs?

**Ash Bowie:** We've got some new songs. We'll schedule some band practices and just see how it goes. It's been sounding good, and we'd like to record with this lineup. We've been working pretty hard on everything in general, trying to be a little more thoughtful about it.

**TOC:** Would Polvo consider playing a complete album à la Pitchfork's "Don't Look Back" gigs?

**Ash Bowie:** I don't really think so, because we never really played that much material off any particular record. I think all of our records have some tracks that aren't suited for live performance. And there's some that I don't think we'd really wanna bother with. In fact, I don't think we could actually re-create some of them.

**TOC:** You were notorious for having really bizarre guitar sounds. Did you invent those tunings?

**Ash Bowie:** Pretty much. When I was learning to play guitar, I would break a couple strings. Instead of immediately restringing the guitar, I would just detune some strings and spend a few days playing around like that. I wound up invariably finding a couple drones that I liked. There's no theory behind it really; I just came up with these tunings. They're all pretty weird. I have three that I use. A couple of 'em are sort of impractical, so I don't change those tunings during the set. I just have a batch of songs for each tuning.

**TOC:** Does guitarist Dave Brylawski do the same?

**Ash Bowie:** He used to, but now he just plays standard tuning. He's tried to rework his parts a little bit. It makes things simpler. We're not all changing guitars at the same time anymore.

**TOC:** What'll you guys be doing in town when not on stage?

**Ash Bowie:** We play the Touch and Go guys in basketball. We're looking forward to beating them and their 6'6" star, Chad. Again. We've never lost to 'em.

Polvo plays a sold-out show at **Subterranean** Friday 25 and **Wicker Park Fest** on Saturday 26.

— Areif Sless-Kitain