

THE NEW YEAR

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BIOGRAPHY

THE NEW YEAR is a band led by guitarists, singers, and songwriters Matt and Bubba Kadane, who led the band Bedhead through the 1990s. Its other four members are Chris Brokaw (drums), Peter Schmidt (guitar), Mike Donofrio (bass), and Josh McKay (keyboards, guitar, and percussion).

They have released two widely acclaimed records on Touch and Go: *Newness Ends*, in 2001, and *The End Is Near*, in 2004; toured the US and Europe extensively; and had their music used in films, TV, and videos.

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Publicity/tour e-mail: chad@tgrec.com

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THE END IS NEAR

Originally released 5/18/2004

TG 256 CD/LP



"The End Is Near"
is one of the
best records
of the year,
from one of
the century's
best bands.

Chicago
New City Weekly

Reviews of
THE END IS NEAR

★★★★ The power of The New Year is difficult to explain to the uninitiated. Let's just say they play more perfect notes than anybody. Their music is an amazing nexus where surgical precision, ace musicianship, and thrifty minimalism intertwine joyously. *The End Is Near* is a true return from these Texas hall-of-famers. **Austin Chronicle**

★★★★ The New Year comes back tugging at heartstrings again with *The End Is Near*, and like its predecessor, you simply cannot listen to it any other way than from beginning to end, just holding on for the emotional ride. **The Stranger (Seattle Weekly)**

The Texas-raised brothers have been crafting lush albums that hide their genius until several months later, when you realize the band's interlaced guitar melodies are firmly lodged in your head....[*The End Is Near*] effortlessly picks up the glowing torch of 2001's *Newness Ends*....Every note seems to hum with an underlying subsonic force. **Magnet**

The New Year's brooding second album, *The End Is Near*, is an antidote for the surfeit of holiday saccharine and commercialized bonhomie....The Kadane's greatest gift is...to convey life's somber side with tricky melodies and phrases that lodge in the brain. **Washington Post**

You won't be able to tear yourself away from it. **CMJ**

The New Year delivers huge hooks, metronomic riffs and driving drumbeats, all of which enhance the Kadanes' amplified whispers on *The End Is Near*. **Alternative Press**

A moody masterwork. **San Antonio Current**

The End Is Near is a bold and consistently surprising sophomore effort **Exclaim (Canada)** While the songs on *The End Is Near* merit multiple listens, they don't sound calculated or manipulative. The music follows the lyrics, largely avoiding the verse-chorus-verse structure. In lesser hands, this structure can lead composers to lose track. Movements fail to connect to one another and the song turns into a disjointed procession of one thing after another. For the Kadane brothers, however, the motif thrives. They have an ear for timbre and melody, as well as a sense of the right parts to repeat in a song. Often, their vaunted instrumental passages are simply a single melody repeated over the course of several minutes, and they have the luxury of doing this without worrying about shattering the construction of the song. **Dusted** All killer, no filler **The Big Takeover**

The Kadane Brothers... Is paralyzing sociophobia hereditary? Is brilliant songwriting in the blood? These two geniuses beg the question and answer it resoundingly at once. Yes. A thousand times yes. This album is further example of their attention to detail and their happy quest for the perfect sad song....[This] is a great album, no matter who wrote it. But the fact that it is yet another great record by a great set of songwriters means something. There is still hope for music in the world, even if it doesn't start until the New Year. **Indie Workshop**

These guys know how to create tension. **Tampa Tribune**

The New Year's sharp observations carry an authoritative weight, making the grim nature of the subjects they grapple with all the more unsettling. **Rockpile**



NEWNESS ENDS

Originally released 2/20/2001
TG 220 CD/180gram LP

THE NEW YEAR

*A subtlety that's
irresistible.*

Reviews of NEWNESS ENDS

MOJO (UK)

The overall sound is monumental and thoroughly seductive, and best of all, it doesn't sound like rehashed grunge, warmed-over metal - or anything else, really. The New Year has created a style which, if this were the best of all possible worlds, could make them stars. **Time Out New York**

A sweet and doleful record peppered with wry couplets. **NME (UK)**
"One Plus One Minus One Equals One" is the sort of mumbled hymn that

marmoset-looking character from Bright Eyes would give important teeth for. **Pitchfork**

The New Year make contemporary American music. Modern-day Americana that deserves appreciation from as many as possible. **Pop Matters** 10 out of 12 **FakeJazz.com** They weave an intricate web of guitars, bass, and vocal lines that displays the maturity of each of the musicians as well as refined songwriting that has stayed the test of time. **Splendid**

★★★★ **Winnipeg Sun** ★★★★★ **Austin-American Statesman** ★★★★★ **Tower Pulse**

An addicting earful. **Columbus Alive** Credit should go to the Kadane brothers who had the vision to dismantle a successful group, refine the key components and reassemble it better. The New Year for the new millennium. **Comes With A Smile**
In the course of three minutes, vocalist Matt Kadane sings of houses as bankrupt museums, the unseen consequences of friends, the brevity of harmony. For added weight, he lets each syllable loll on his tongue before letting it

slowly roll off. **The Absolute Sound** Unflinching precision in both technique and transmission of emotion. **Village Voice**

So, yeah, the New Year sounds an awful lot like Bedhead, but who can really complain? Bedhead was one of the most unsung but beautiful indie-rock bands of the '90s. **Billboard** ★★★★★ It's such a treat to hear that sound again, the crushing power of restraint, the celebration of the commonplace that marks the gorgeous music of Matt and Bubba Kadane. **Austin Chronicle** The Kadane brothers' best magic trick is to build thick, ornate arrangements, often requiring

a third guitar to fill in the cracks, that nevertheless evoke the quietest of solitude. **New York Press** The brothers Kadane led the now defunct Bedhead, and if you thought the slowed-down, understated indoctrinations of that band possessed quiet powers that magically defied their mellow first impressions, wait till you hear what Matt and Bubba are up to now. **Seattle Weekly**

The New Year's songs are a stunning union of noise and calm. Even the guitar rave ups that ended both the main set and the encores were glacial rather than explosive. **Washington Post**

... BUT THINGS DON'T SOUND ANY DIFFERENT

Following the breakup of slowcore pioneers Bedhead, Matt and Bubba Kadane have soldiered on as **THE NEW YEAR** in their quest to fill the world with beautifully depressing music. But as the brothers explained to Dan Bergevin, getting people to make the connection is harder than expected. Photo by Jason King.



"Towards the end, I really started to hate the name Bedhead," admits singer/guitarist Matt Kadane, who

formed the band with his brother, singer/guitarist Bubba, in 1991. "Toni&Guy had come out with their Bed Head line, and I didn't want our band name to signify hair products."

The end for the Dallas quintet finally came in August of 1998 after a lengthy tour in support of *Transaction de Novo*, Bedhead's third LP, but just a year later the Brothers Kadane were back in the slowcore saddle. With help from drummer Chris Brokaw (Come, Codeine), bassist Mike Donofrio (Saturnine) and guitarist Peter Schmidt (Bedhead), The New Year and their debut album, 2001's *Newness Ends*, were born.

"We were a little uneasy about the super-positive implications of [the band name], but we tried to undercut those implications with the album titles," says Matt. "The New Year is the name we'll take to our graves, because it's such a pain in the ass to think of a different one."

Not surprisingly, *Newness Ends* sounded like a natural progression from what the Kadanes had been doing in Bedhead. Rhythms were tinkered with and some relatively upbeat material was included, but in the end Matt and Bubba weren't interested in drastically changing their sound.

"When I have said that *Newness Ends* could have been the fourth Bedhead record, I was saying that that was the record Bubba and I were going to make anyway," says Matt. "So in a way I think of us as having made five records, with our new album as the fifth."

That new offering, *The End Is Near* (Touch And Go), opens with the title track ("The end's not near, it's here/ Hallelujah, spread the cheer"), which makes it abundantly clear that the Kadanes still don't want to mess with the formula they perfected in Bedhead—the intertwining guitars of Matt, Bubba and Schmidt suck you in with intricate melodies accented by the slow-motion rhythm section. To be fair, *The End Is Near*—which introduces

Macha's Josh McKay into the mix on various instruments—is a bit less experimental than *Newness Ends*, and a few noticeable differences make sure the album doesn't sound like a rehash, including the mellow funk of "Chinese Handcuffs" and the symphonic finale in "Stranger To Kindness." Some tracks are as murky as ever, exploring such themes as growing old ("18") and superficial relationships ("Sinking Ship"). As always, the Kadanes have made a record full of slow, depressing music that is beautiful enough to put a smile on your face. It truly is the bastard child of indie rock and the blues.

The End Is Near took awhile to make, and with the guys scattered across the country, the slow production schedule is sure to be in effect for some time to come. With Bubba still living in Dallas and Matt nearly 2,000 miles away in Boston, the writing process is long and arduous, which actually ends up benefiting their meticulously crafted music.

"We write the songs by sending tapes back and forth," says Matt. "That's partly why it takes us so long to make records. I also think we would release some pretty lame records if we made albums yearly, so ultimately I think we're better off."

One significant way The New Year aren't better off is in the moniker department—despite having retained the sound that has led many people to refer to them as slowcore pioneers, they've noticed a significant decrease in turnout at their live shows. The band hopes that people will eventually make the connection.

"We were kind of naive about the name change," admits Matt. "We thought since Bedhead was broken up we'd just start a new band and everyone would know it was us. But it's never that way. It's amazing what's in a name." ♣



THE NEW YEAR

The lonesome Texans of The New Year are many things, but happy isn't one of them. Led by brothers Matt and Bubba Kadane, The New Year, despite its name—redolent of champagne toasts, Dick Clark, boisterous gatherings and second chances at life—has never trafficked in optimism.

One need go no further than the titles of the band's two records, *Newness Ends* and the just-released *The End Is Near*, both on Touch and Go. Not exactly stuff to get you out of bed in the morning.

The opening track of *The End Is Near*, delves even further into the kingdom of gloom. Titled "The End's Not Near," it initially hints at a relatively cheery outcome. But then comes the first line, sung in a murmur and accompanied by a somber, painstaking piano riff, "The end's not near/it's here." Oh, well, then. Pass the cyanide won't you?

But to the Kadanes, *The End Is Near* wallows in a much different sort of sadness than their previous efforts.

"We had doubts about reusing the imagery of 'end' in a record title," admits Matt. "But this record deals with different kinds of endings than on *Newness Ends*. There the endings mainly had to do with personal relationships. Here they're about something larger."

That "something larger" appears to be in this case, the bodily end we're all destined to meet. Suffused with thoughts on aging and death, an awareness of mortality permeates the album like bacteria on a scraped knee.

"There's one thing that you should know/there's no escaping getting old," laments "18," a song mourning the passing of that majestic age. "Disease," on the other hand, points out the body's inevitable slide into constant vulnerability as time passes.

"We're racing through time and, after having peaked at the end of adolescence, decaying along the way," notes Matt of the record's subject matter.

Not the sort of material usually explored by rock bands, who usually rely on maintaining a semblance of ceaseless youth. The energy of rock music owes itself almost entirely to hormones, to the turmoil and exuberance experienced when a human body turns into a biological time bomb.

But in The New Year's world, we're all just clocks slowly winding down, crystal balls dropping not towards a new beginning, but a final end. Some folks rail loudly against the advent of the Grim Reaper, but The New Year seems to have settled into

a rueful acceptance. The Kadanes have spent years, in their earlier band Bedhead, and now, perfecting their meditative yet melodic style. The volume and abandon of classic Velvets-style rock-as-hymn has been boiled down to its essence—quiet, focused and pure. Delivered in a sleepy, off-handed manner, The New Year's sharp observations carry an authoritative weight, making the grim nature of the subjects they grapple with all the more unsettling. It's not a question of going gently into that good night, because ultimately, no one has any choice in the matter.

Yet *The End Is Near* does manage to pry its gaze away from the inevitable, and that saves its obsessions from becoming tiresome. The opening track, after its bleak first line, explores other reactions to the problems of mortality and time. The song's narrator watches "the millenarians throw a party for a thousand years," adding in a brilliant coda, "If you call me I won't be home/I'm hiding from the kingdom come." It's both deadly serious, oddly funny and eerily touching. But does it indicate that The New Year sees something beyond the shuffling off the mortal coil?

"The song does on some level look at the future as unknown," Matt concedes. "It's like Donald Rumsfeld's metaphysical poem about known unknowns. Age and death are the known knowns. The future in the song, or at least one version of the future, is a known unknown."

This sort of open uncertainty does not extend towards an embrace of a religion that would plug the hole of the unknowable, however. Matt and Bubba recently wrote the soundtrack to *Heif House*, director George Ratliff's documentary about a church-run haunted house in Texas that illustrates the wages of a sinful life.

"There's something terrifying about people who think the future has been divinely revealed, thinking they can map out what's to come," Matt says. "But I liked that the movie portrayed the rank and file followers with enough sensitivity for me to get an idea about them as real people."

It's that sort of attitude that explains the appeal of The New Year. No matter how despairing the outlook of a song, there will always be a kernel of deliberate, evocative humanity at the center. And of course, in spite of all the kvetching about getting old, the band retains a spark of rock 'n' roll youth.

"I don't think of The New Year as direct reference to either New Year's Day or New Year's eve. New Year's eve is a right for, as a friend of mine says, amateur drinkers—on the next day they repent and regret. We've always tried to be more professional." ■