

# UNDER THE RADA



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## Washed Out: *Within and Without* (Sub Pop)

You can't blame Ernest Greene for the chillwave label and whatever came after just like you can't blame The Beatles for every crappy band they inspired. Once you ignore the baggage, you're left with the music, and *Within and Without*, Greene's full-length debut, is a fine record full of sleepy bedroom pop music.

*Within and Without* is loaded with the same kind of '80s-inflected tunes that populated Greene's EPs. He hasn't made any drastic changes to his formula. Instead, he appears to have spent his time perfecting it. Shimmering horns and laser-light show synthesizers create the backdrop for "Before," where Greene's buried voice manages to make what would otherwise seem like a somewhat ridiculous exercise feel legitimate. This is the general conceit of *Washed Out*: The music is always on the verge of feeling like a joke, like it's some lost soundtrack to a never produced television show from 1987. But Greene's voice, which is without even a tinge of irony, lends weight to every song.

Besides "Before," *Within and Without* boasts a handful of standout tracks, including the more up-tempo "Echoes," and the beautiful "Soft." Something in the back and forth of notes in "Soft" simply feels comfortable—as the title implies—and this is where Greene excels. Over the course of nine songs and a tight 40 minutes, there's not a single dud, but there are a whole host of chord progressions and hooks that fit as nicely as an old shirt.

This is subtle music, and begs to be held close to the vest. Greene seems to be a smart man, and so one hopes he can avoid the overexposure that such non-controversial music can engender through commercials and television. *Washed Out*, despite the label and increasing popularity, still feels like a secret, a hallmark of the best bedroom pop. ([www.myspace.com/thebabeinthewoods](http://www.myspace.com/thebabeinthewoods))

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By Jim Scott