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Handsome Furs:
Sound Kapital
(Sub Pop)

Although Wolf Parade has long focused the spotlight away from the many side projects that members Spencer Krug and Dan Boeckner have spun off at a dizzying rate over the years, it's been indie rock's best kept secret that their individual works have long exceeded their main gig in terms of quality. While Krug often receives much of the praise for his Sunset Rubdown project, Boeckner's Handsome Furs—an off-kilter, tattered-synth duo featuring his wife, Alexei Perry—have now quietly unleashed three records of high-strung, damaged pop songs that rank alongside his partner's best material. The latest in this string of releases, *Sound Kapital*, may be the best of the bunch—a hard-hitting, spine-crushing work of post-industrial electro-punk that owes more to Suicide than Pavement.

Finding inspiration in electronic music from 1980s Eastern Europe, Handsome Furs take the keyboard-laden influences from 2009's *Face Control* to a new level of aggression: The songs here may lace shattered guitars within the framework, but it's the black and white shingles that roar and sting. Lead single "What About Us" bounces along on a vigorous synth line that's exacerbated by the pained uncertainty of the lyrics; "Repatriated" cracks with stabs of six-string squalls that break up the threatening drone of the keys; and opener "When I Get Back" has an insistent hook that pounds away yet avoids monotony by being damn catchy. On *Sound Kapital*, Dan Boeckner makes a pretty convincing case in rivaling Spencer Krug as a leading light in Wolf Parade.

(www.myspace.com/handsomefurs)

8/10 By Anthony Lombardi