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Trails Across a Dark Ocean: Scene Noir – Waves

 [July 11, 2015](#)  [Valerie Polichar](#)



You'll be forgiven if your immediate thought on hearing *Waves*' first track is that you've found an undiscovered Sisters of Mercy album. Though Montreal band **Scene Noir** bills itself as dream pop, the goth tones are evident, and

lead vocalist Andrew Velvet's near-bass-range voice against the dreamy background recalls Andrew Eldritch at his "ashes and ashes" darkest. Meanwhile, Dave Brennan and Velvet's sparkly guitars paint a forest of crystalline trees over a deep, droning backdrop of classic synth sounds.

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There are other influences here – the second track, “Sunday,” carries echoes of Shriekback; “Celebration” evokes Eurythmics, Flock of Seagulls, Depeche Mode. Fans of Yaz (Yazoo) and Ultravox may feel a shock of recognition as well.

But Velvet’s speaking style pulls *Waves*’ tracks away from a simple mirror of the sleek-



production ‘80s (could “Velvet” be a nod to Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground?). Here and there that style causes him to inadvertently hit an off note (most uncomfortably on “Bride”), but for the most part the vocals are distinctive and compelling. The duo’s spare accompaniment creates almost a post-New-Wave (let’s invent a new genre) feel.

Atmospheric synth elements of ambient and shoegaze also weave their way into the mix. But, proving they are more than a synth band, Scene Noir employ shimmering guitars to draw a smooth lead in “1992 (Into the Light)” and build a wall of sound in the finale of the lovely “Shelter.” It’s the eerie resignation of “Come Together,” though, that haunts the listener long after the album has ended. “We separate, we come together... so well.”

Waves (Cold Model Records, 2015) is available on [Bandcamp](#). Follow **Scene Noir** on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/scenenoir>.



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