



**K**arma Controllers channel a wide breadth of influences into a cohesive blend of indie-rock and jazz. Their new album, *Sirens*, is the result of carefully crafting those influences into a focused whole. Ambitious, but never self-important, Karma Controllers have created a unique album that stands out from the crowded Canadian indie-music scene.

With *Sirens*, Karma Controllers draw upon their contemporaries like Stars and Nada Surf. Helen Kuan's vocals are reminiscent of Jenny Lewis, Jack Jamieson attributes Sondre Lerche as an inspiration to his guitar playing, and Jesse Paul's drums owe as much to big-band jazz as they do to modern rock styles. Those influences are combined with a love of classic composers like Cole Porter as well as modern Japanese jazz bands such as Soil & "Pimp" Sessions.

*Sirens* is an eclectic album that features lush instrumentation including guitars, glockenspiel, mandolin, accordion, horns, flute, keyboards, drums and string sections. Each song is different and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The band describes their production method:

"We don't limit ourselves on record to what is possible to perform live, we use a lot of instruments and certainly have a lot more going on at once than we could do without overdubbing. That being said, we make sure our songs sound great in both settings – our songs need to work live, when we're more limited with our instrumentation, and the most important thing is to have a solid foundation of melody and song-writing."

*The Longest Year* opens the record with folky mandolin and becomes a rich sounding rock song. *Whisper Sister* features back and forth male-female vocals and a wailing horn section. *Searchlights 2* begins as a silky jazz tale of longing for an ex-lover and evolves into a spy-themed, orchestra accompanied climax. Throughout the album, lyrics express the difficulties of travel, ambition, and abandoned loved ones, with each song revealing different facets of these themes.

*Sirens* is a confident album by Karma Controllers and demonstrates that they are not afraid of forging their own musical identity.

## About Karma Controllers

Karma Controllers is made up of Helen Kuan and Jack Jamieson, who started the band in 2005.

They are joined on *Sirens* by drummer Jesse Paul, guest vocalist Neil Rankin (Foxfire Forest), Dave Clarke (Still Soul) on saxophone, Andre Lowey (Foxfire Forest) on trumpet and Ben Bowser on flute.

Both Helen Kuan and Jack Jamieson have been active musicians from a young age, singing and experimenting with a variety of instruments. They both grew up in Toronto and met during high school. Jack studied audio production in Ryerson's Radio and Television Arts program, and recently produced Foxfire Forest's self-titled debut. He's also recorded several albums of his own material, which heavily feature Helen's vocals. The two have been performing and recording together in various forms for many years and have hit the stages at many Toronto hot spots.

