

Setting the music world on fire Indie rock unit Arcade Fire lives up to hype

Seven members skilled in over fifteen instruments including cellos, glockenspiels and horns. Headed by a husband-wife duo. Based in Montreal, Quebec. These are certainly not elements you'd expect to find in a modern rock band, but then again the band Arcade Fire is anything but typical. Founded back in 2003, Arcade Fire has released three studio albums, *Funeral*, *Neon Bible* and *The Suburbs*, all of which have received massive critical praise. Their most recent, *The Suburbs*, came out in early August, making this the perfect time to reflect back on Arcade Fire's history, how they've shaken up the indie rock scene and why you should be listening.

In September of 2004, husband and wife Win Butler and Régine Chassagne and their band Arcade Fire released their magnificent debut titled *Funeral*. It was both a commercial and critical success for indie label Merge Records, topped countless critics' best-of-the-year and decade lists, and is now seen as a modern classic. Though its title would imply dreary situations and depressing hopelessness, the band found a way to tackle a number of different themes and ideas, including alienation and death, with intensity, joy and understanding creating an uplifting, inspiring record. Many of these themes carried over to their second album, *Neon Bible*. Often seen as a bit darker and more politically-charged than its predecessor, it too received superb reviews and even reached number 2 on the Billboard Top 200. The album continued the band's penchant for grandiose productions, huge and intense sound, and grand statements in their songs and records. They followed this up with 2010's *The Suburbs*. Once again, the album was met with universal praise by critics and fans alike. The album has a more sprawling feel, as it is several songs longer than their previous efforts, but is by no means watered down by its length. The album retains what has always made the band great: their unique sound, their honesty, and their lyrics.

In addition to their studio recordings, the band is also an incredibly popular live act. Their shows tend to be long, loud, and epic in scale and feeling. The band has been nominated for multiple awards, including the Grammy's Best Alternative Music Album for both *Funeral* and *Neon Bible*. Their work has caught the attention of musicians such as David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen, and U2. Most recently, the band has received attention for their newest "interactive" music video for "We Used To Wait", which allows users to input the address that they grew up in causing the video to personalize itself for each viewer. If you're still skeptical about whether or not you want to fully invest in the band just yet, some songs that are good starting points include "Wake Up" and "Rebellion (Lies)" from their debut, "Keep the Car Running" from *Neon Bible*, and "Ready to Start" and "City With No Children" from *The Suburbs*.

Though they definitely sound different from anything found on modern popular radio, Arcade Fire is an incredibly important, catchy and innovative indie rock group and is absolutely worth a listen. For more information and tour dates, visit their website at www.arcadefire.com or simply purchase their music, available in most retailers and on iTunes. You won't regret it.