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FAVORITE SESSIONS

Neil Halstead: Warm, Inviting And Pastoral

By *Cheryl Waters*

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Laura Totten

Neil Halstead performs at KEXP studios.

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KEXP, *October 28, 2008* - Listening to Neil Halstead, I always run through a gamut of emotions: No matter what's going on in my life, his music puts me into a blissful dream state, and I'm happy. Yet at the same time, his breathtaking voice and guitar work are beautiful enough to make me want to weep. When he performed this session at KEXP, I was eager to see what emotions he'd put me through this time.

I've been a fan of Halstead's work since he was essentially a kid making fuzzy, distorted noise in the influential shoegazer band Slowdive. But now he's all grown up, and after drifting through the dusty fields of Mojave 3, he's settled into a stunning yet carefree style. As I listened to him in this session, I couldn't help but think that this was the music he was meant to play — warm, inviting and pastoral.

While he played songs from his latest album, *Oh! Mighty Engine*, I caught myself smiling at times and tearing up at others, and at the end found myself rendered speechless. "Wow," was I all could say to one of the most satisfying in-studio performances I've ever heard.

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