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by Peter Funk

Kenny Chesney

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by Anthony Easton

Various Artists

ErstLive001 / ErstLive002 / schnee_live / ErstLive004
by Ed Howard

Various Artists

Camping
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Liars Academy

No News Is Good News

Equal Vision Records

2001

A-

About six or seven years ago, back in my days of fledgling punk-dom, a friend introduced me to the Baltimore band Blank. For two years following that night (which involved him passing the 'oldest surviving' copy of Blanks first album to me) I purchased seven inch after seven inch of melodic, yet softly powerful rock music. As the releases progressed, I noticed a mellowed Blank- still as 'rockin' as my first listen, but a bit refined... 'mature' if you will. I soon gathered that Blank (who by that time had become my favorite band) had parted ways. Sadly, I proceeded to move their records toward the rear of my collection, and gave up all hope of ever seeing them in a 'concert' setting.

Days later, a friend mentioned that a new band had been formed from the ashes of Blank and they were to play a small record store in an old city just north of my suburb. I leaped and bounded to the cold building to hear Cross My Heart play to a crown of twelve people. A bit like Blank, I thought, but catchier with a more intense feeling of sadness. Time went on, I managed to experience Cross My Heart a few more times before they too went the way of Blank- becoming a memory on record and tape. After news spread of their demise, I managed to hear of yet another project involving members of Cross My Heart. Evan (of Cross My Heart and little mentioned Baltimore hardcore band The Pee Tanks) and Ryan (Cross My Heart and Blank) along with Matt (a member of famed Richmond VA hardcore band, Strike Anywhere) formed the Liars Academy.

Progression of 'Ryan Bands' (Blank, Cross My Heart, Liars Academy) has seemed to increase in catchiness with each bands release and much more with each subsequent band. The Liars Academy are twice as 'poppy' as the previous bands, but still maintains similar guitar work and over all skill in songwriting that Ryan has exhibited throughout the years.

Lyrically, the Liars Academy tend to tread along the edge of crap. Some songs have throwaway lyrics that seem to have taken no thought to write, while others mirror the quality of writing shown in his earlier days with Blank. My first opinion was that they all were mere drivel, disappointing in comparison with his early lyrical skill. I realized, however, that the bad lyrics seem to be lyrics written in haste and are far out numbered by quality lines.

Overall, 'No News Is Good News' was disappointing, but only in comparison to Ryan and Evans previous bands. My opinion was colored by the memory of those bands, and initially, the Liars Academy was only a poor knock off, a disturbing cloud over bands I love. I soon realized that The Liars Academy's intent wasn't to stir the flame of past bands to spark interest in this new incarnation...they simply set out to create good, melodious rock music. Though the CD has its pitfalls (its slight nod toward 'alt-country' and a weird Guns and Roses influence my friend pointed out) they are more than made up for by crisp vocal harmonies, punchy drum work and powerful guitars. I believe that this release is worthy of your dollars.

Reviewed by: Al Charity

Reviewed on: 2003-09-01

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