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Various Artists
Parx-c A Compilation of Independent Artists
Clear Springs Entertainment
2007

Another day, another compilation. There seems to be a rash of them these days, each of them highlighting the wealth of talent that exists outside the mainstream. This one has been compiled in Australia but features acts from around the World. Well, Australia, New Zealand, America and Scotland anyway.

Usual game plan now. We'll run through the 20 tracks and pick the best. On your marks...

First on is Seattle's Long Winters with the mature, radio friendly "Pushover". Then there's the plaintive and affecting "Drive" from Amanda Rogers. Upping the tempo is the unashamedly commercial "All I Need" from Boston's The Brightwings. Next, and getting all intense and melancholy like REM on Prozac, are Australia's Fourth Floor Collapse with "Another Push". Katie Brianna's "The Devil Came Back for You" is a little bit country and a little bit awkward too. (Getting up to speed now...)

Plundering the angst ridden indie rock treasure chest is Scotland's Stapleton with "Ships of the North". Bowing to commercial pressures - and appearing to be none the worse for it - are The Wellingtons with their irrepressible sing along "She Gave Up". Bringing yet more intensity to the party are The Dramas with "The Scene's the Same". Seasoning their songs with grunge and quirkiness are New Zealand's Pine with "Hosanna". Jenny Dalton's "Lily and the Stranger" is the kind of song that students and intellectuals everywhere will easily warm too. Sticking to a distinctly commercial track - and why not? - is Julian Coryell with "My Generation". "As I Tell You" is a simple song but Rebecca Loebe uses it to charm you - works for me - whilst power chords and stadium friendly strutting are much in evidence in "Crave" from Agent. (Pauses for breath and another beer...)

More big guitars and banging of drums from The Scissor File with "Reason to Run" and then, in the form of "Drugeater", we get a rather more effective rock and hip hop hybrid from Highroad No.28. Suddenly fragile and emotional again, our ears are caressed by "Boomerangs & Seesaws" from Shannon Curtis before we encounter Joe Rohan's "Pair of Horses" - an earnest performance but lacking in sparkle. The Beautiful Burn read through the indie rock playbook and then give us "Introduction". Wearing their seventies' rock influences on their sleeves are The Strain with "Linger".and taking us out of this album is a tasteful slice of jazz funk pie called "Flow" from Jessica McPherson.

Another respectable compilation then but, like the rest of them, it is unclear what it is supposed to achieve. We doubt that anyone makes any money out of these type of things and they are no doubt done with the best of intentions but one track per act is merely enough to tantalise you rather than satisfy your needs. There is nothing actually wrong with any of the music on this compilation but, as a whole, it comes off more as a mixtape that a guy might make up to impress a girl with his musical tastes. A plus point of this particular compilation, however, was the extra biographical information that could be accessed by sticking it in a computer. Finally and for the record, the standout tracks were from Amanda Rogers, Rebecca Loebe and The Wellingtons.

3 Carrots - Best Enjoyed With Beer