

Mp3 Neat Stripes - The End Of That



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Eclectic new selections for the shower-singer set... 12 MP3 Songs POP: with Live-band Production, POP: Quirky Details: Neat Stripes is basically the creative outlet for a guy named Paul Walker. "Writing songs makes me happier than anything else I've ever done," he says, "It's a constant preoccupation, with a song I'm working on running through my head over and over and over. I just can't leave it alone until it sounds good to me. There's nothing I'd rather do." What happened was this: Paul, moving from New Jersey down to Georgia for college, brought his Talking Heads, his Paul Simon, and his They Might Be Giants, and he met, or more accurately rediscovered, country and the blues. Willie Nelson was a joke in New Jersey; here he was a legend. By the same token, the blues was Eric Clapton; Muddy Waters was just a name you ought to know. Coming to Georgia changed all that. And this persistent interest in all things Latin, African, and rhythmic always hovered nearby. Paul hosted regular 'jazz nights' at his house for two years and eventually bought an upright bass as a result, which became integral to the sound of Neat Stripes. The music of Tom Waits seeped in gradually, showing its depth over a space of years. All these things marinated into the songs that Neat Stripes would play. "Every time I hear a really great song, something that moves me, I want to write a song like that. Whether it's Cesaria Evora or David Byrne or Merle Haggard - I want to capture a little bit of it, of whatever it is that had that effect on me." Escaping to Athens, Georgia from his hometown in 1994, Paul was only peripherally interested in the Athens music scene. And to this day, the indie- and college-rock the scene is known for remains fairly unimportant to the sound of Neat Stripes. Though a collaborator (on various instruments) on several local projects, from a straight-up rock-and-roll band (The Eskimos) to a salsa group (Tropico) to a low-fi indie-pop "Elephant 6" project (Calvin, Don't Jump!), Neat Stripes stands apart. The band grew out of another one called One Trick Mule that Paul and his friend Andy Pope both played in, sharing the songwriting duties between

them. Growing apart musically, these two remained friends and band mates, with Andy suggesting that they form another group to play just Paul's songs (while Andy took a break from performing his). With the addition of Dusty Kent, a guitarist and mutual friend, Neat Stripes was born. Playing shows in Athens and Atlanta won the band some early praise. "Lots of buzz on these kids," wrote the Flagpole Magazine (5/22/01), also calling the group "eclectic and engaging" (4/11/01). Then, about a year into its existence and awash in material, Neat Stripes decided to record an album, an endeavor with which none of its members had any experience whatsoever. The frequency of the live shows tapered off as the band worked for a solid year at Paul's hastily-constructed home studio, recording on a PC. The arrangement proved occasionally frustrating but eventually rewarding as the album emerged, entitled - with hoped-for irony - The End of That.

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