

Mp3 Benjamin Faust - Start



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Inventive, witty, and organic piano-and-vocal prerecorded sound product. Have a go. 10 MP3 Songs

POP: Piano, POP: Quirky Details: When Benjamin Faust was in high school and college, people used to crowd into practice rooms to listen to him play the piano and sing his own compositions. "They were mostly girls," opines the 24-year-old songwriter. "I think they were after more than just my music." But Faust refused to be distracted and now, years after the practice room, he's celebrating the release of his first album, appropriately titled *Start*. The album represents the end of one part of his musical journey and the beginning of another. Faust grew up in a home where music was always present. His mother was an accomplished singer and his father, a science fiction novelist, had an extensive music collection that expanded the young musician's musical horizons beyond the realm of church music and the latest offerings on the radio. "My dad got me into different sounding music. That's how I got to know Kate Bush and other new wave artists. Bush was a big inspiration for me because she writes about all sorts of different things, taking inspiration from literature and film. Before discovering her music I had this perception that pop music was strictly shallow love songs." Before he began to write pop songs, however, there was an early detour. "For a time I considered a career in film score composition. I wrote pieces that my high school concert band performed. Then, in my junior year of high school, I won the Ohio Young Composer's Competition and had my piece *Premonition* played by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony." Pop music won out, and eventually Faust would work his way through two albums' worth of material before settling on the ten songs that make up his debut album. Some recordings went by the wayside, victims of Faust's graduation from college and search for a daytime career. Then, when he finally settled down to record in a house in Ohio, there were more complications. "Start was originally going to be a concept album about college and learning, but the key track became difficult and cumbersome while

recording, and I pulled it because I was unsatisfied with how it was turning out. The new title came from the fact that the album is my first, and is from the first line of Ivy in the Air." Eventually, Faust prevailed. The result is what Faust calls "prerecorded sound product" - a collection of songs that shows he learned well from his father's music collection and his own musical explorations. There's Jazz Vicodin, which compares two mind-altering substances - jazz music, and the hydrocodone based painkiller Vicodin. Empty Nest and This College Life, both from the scrapped concept album, offer two views of the college experience, one from the point of view of the student, the other from that of the parents. The song Stateline is about the effects and influence of state run gambling, complete with a ringing piano that represents the turning of slot machine wheels. "When I first went to college I went into what I thought was a coffee shop and it turned out to be a gambling joint," Faust explained. "They're all over West Virginia. Most of them aren't fancy, and rather depressing. I spent time in one place and remember an old lady gambling with her oxygen tank with her even though the room was heavy with tobacco smoke. People were completely mesmerized by the machines, and if they won they would end up gambling their winnings away." This song's inspiration provides the cover imagery for Start, featuring shots of a video lottery parlor in West Virginia that is across the river from Ohio. Ti Dot Matre is Faust's look at the many facets of the lives of women in today's culture. "It almost didn't make the album because I thought it wasn't full sounding enough, but when the key track fell out of the project, I needed one more song. It's a good thing it's there. It's proving to be one of the more popular tracks on the album." Start closes with the track that Faust considers the project's "thesis statement," Motorbike. The song was inspired as he drove through the winding hills of central West Virginia, following the driver of a red motorbike. "The driver was wearing all red gear, and I was fascinated by the way he took the many curves of the road so smoothly." Besides voicing the piano to evoke those winding roads, Faust sings the word "motorbike" some 70 times during the course of the song - about one every 3 seconds. Besides the original nature of the songs, the sound of Start is unique as well. It was recorded on a small upright piano, in the dining-room-turned-recording-studio in Faust's former Ohio home. It imbued the recording with Lo-Fi goodness and lent itself to family participation in the album's creation. Faust duets with his mother on Ti Dot Matre; his sister took the photographs used in the packaging; and his father helped with technical aspects of the recording and provided half of the handclaps on the song Wanda. Faust now makes his home in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is hard at work on his next musical odyssey. He currently lives in a

studio apartment that has been described as a "postage stamp" by some. He observes that, "in a lot of ways, it's like recreating my days of playing piano in the practice rooms."

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