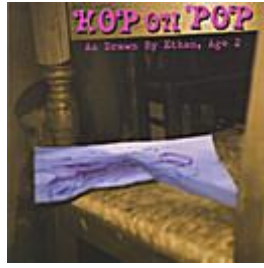


Mp3 Hop On Pop - As Drawn By Ethan - Age 2



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A cornucopia of everything to like about pop music....from acoustic balladry to out-loud shoutalong behind a maelstorm of guitars to 3 part vocal harmonies. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Power Pop, POP: Beatles-pop Details: Power pop. Chamber pop. Indie Pop. Alternative Pop. Indeed, pop music can be a chameleon that defies easy description. Although many bands tackle just one aspect of it, Hop on Pop begs the question...why not tackle them all? On their debut album "As Drawn by Ethan, Age 2," the band does exactly that. Shredding power chords and an assaulting chorus build-up finds the band at its sonic zenith in the CD's opener "If It's Important To You". There's no time to catch your breath as the mad-scientist's concoction "Ashes on the Water" follows with its seemingly endless layers of feedback, moog, guitar-wash and uniquely conjured harmonies. The churning, bouncy English dancehall single "Cary's Here" leads into the dynamic majesty of "Miles from Monday". When Hop on Pop strips down for bare-bones acoustic excursions like "False Start" or an unblushing ballad "I Do", be prepared for the coming storms of "Suckers" and the re-invigorated Sub Rosa classic "I Got it Back". The CD closes by blasting the listener with a maelstorm of distortion-laden neo-Nirvana crunch on "Block Block", a chaotic joy ride into the sunset. If someone's guitar didn't get smashed at the end of the song, it was only because the band fell down laughing. The idea of Hop on Pop first emerged while founding member and singer-songwriter-guitarist Todd Leiter-Weintraub was kicking around his self-recorded "Lo-fi is Better than No-Fi At All" EP in 2002. At the time, Leiter-Weintraub was merely testing the waters for label support to possibly release a full-length debut album. The demo featured spare acoustic offerings with few embellishments and even fewer production values. However, even with the limited sound quality, the spirit and execution of the songs were vibrant and compelling. Then again, Todd was no newcomer to music or songwriting. Leiter-Weintraub had briefly cut his teeth in punk bands such as Cash Cow

(1994-5) and Chew Toy (1995), playing Naked Raygun-inspired fast'n'loud punk with reckless abandon (and sporting a mohawk to boot). After the pure punk phase wore off, his most formative stint began in the quartet Sub Rosa in 1996, alongside Chicago music veterans vocalist/bassist Tim Ferguson (The Me Decade, Red Plastic Buddha), guitarist Todd Lazar and drummer David Kling. Sub Rosa championed a twin channel sound, as they alternated invigorating waves of Ferguson and Lazar's psychedelic brew with shorter compact power-pop anthems provided mainly by Leiter-Weintraub and Kling. Initially, the band worked extremely well at presenting the two seemingly divergent styles as an integrated sound. However, as the chasm eventually widened between the competing songwriters, the band decided to break ranks in 1998. Yet Todd's musical itch hardly subsided. He was determined to keep his songs alive, and did so with his trusty acoustic guitar and solo gigs as the century turned over. "Lo-fi" was born soon afterwards, and Todd sent out copies all over Chicago, re-energized by the prospect of a solo venture. One such copy landed on Spade Kitty's doorstep in mid 2002. The mixture of raw talent and urgency in the songs greatly intrigued the label. After an unannounced appearance by SK brass at an Uncommon Ground solo acoustic gig, a deal was struck to release a debut. The only condition: Todd would need to focus on fleshing out more well-defined hi-fi arrangements of the tunes. This prompted Todd to ask Tim and Dave, the original rhythm section which had defined his pop songs in their formative years, to back him once again in the context of a full-fledged solo debut. To round out the sound, the trio became a quartet, as Todd asked Matt Walters (Cost of Recess) to join in the fun, providing a keyboard, guitar or saxophone wherever it was called for. For 20 months, the group arranged, amalgamated and tinkered with Todd's songs, using TimPam Alley Ltd., and eventually, the famous Uberstudio as their playground. The results yielded everything that was hoped for, as the basic elements of the songs remained as strong as ever, and the veteran group's stunning and unique arrangements provide listeners with a virtual candy factory of differently sweet pop flavors. "As drawn by Ethan, Age 2" illustrates influences ranging from Big Star to Hank Williams, from Guided By Voices to Super Furry Animals, from Kinks to Syd Barrett. And even as band arrangements grew brilliantly complex, Todd's powerful songwriting, lyrical wit and melodic command boldly shine through to create a masterpiece of pop array. Brilliantly recorded, mixed and mastered by Veteran Mark Schwarz (Neko Case, Chamber Strings, Freakwater), "As Drawn by Ethan, Age 2" is everything one can hope for in a pop debut...a high level of songwriting and an equally high level of originality. Enjoy.

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