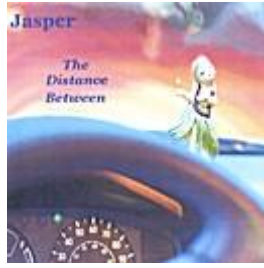


Mp3 Jasper - The Distance Between



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Take a smidgen of Ben Folds, a dose of the Bends- era Radiohead, a few drops of Fountains of Wayne, the concept of one week in the lives of a long distance relationship, and you have the recipe for Jasper's The Distance Between. 12 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, POP: Power Pop Details: THE DISTANCE BETWEEN By Joseph Helmreich, Contributor, The Inside Beat There are some albums that, upon first listening to them, seem to almost leap out of the stereo and attack the listener with the brilliance, wit and sheer excitement of the music---only to find themselves, days later, mysteriously drained of any lasting impact. Then, there are the CD's that start out pleasant, maybe mildly entertaining, but then, as they grow on the listener, gradually reveal themselves to be more and more arresting until the listener feels almost trapped by the songs, hunted by them, haunted by them. "The Distance Between," the new album from Long Island singer-songwriter Jasper, manages to combine both of these qualities. It is startlingly fresh the first time you hear it and then, as weeks go by, more and more of its songs become stuck in your head and soon enough, you find yourself coping with a new addiction. Jasper, who wrote all the songs, lets us know right away, on "Leave the Tape Running," that he wants "to make a record that will just feel good, that is not misunderstood," that he'll "believe in." This is that stereotypical intro track; fun, happy, bouncy---in this particularly case, also funny, as Jasper moans about the miles of tape that he's recorded but rejected. This song is a good introduction to the artist's refreshing sound and quirky sense of humor, but it is only at the second track that we begin to see the album's central theme beginning to emerge. On "Should Have," Jasper describes a night of hanging out with friends, a night of nodding and forcing smiles, that he would have rather had spent on the phone talking to his girlfriend. "Should Have" is the first chapter in what seems to be a larger tale about one weekend in the life of a long-distance relationship. However, despite the presence of a story and a concept, the songs still vary widely in subject

matter and style and manage to stand on their own. The album has an acoustic feel that is sometimes simple, loose and poppy and, at other times, lush and densely layered. Several of the songs are reminiscent of acts like Guster and Dispatch, though Jasper's influences seem to stretch pretty wide. "Age," one of the album's catchiest tunes, has something of a Granddaddy feel, while "Jess" is pure Ben Folds. "The Weekend Drive" sounds like it might have come off REM's Time Out of Mind and "Goodnight, Not Goodbye," a gorgeous ballad about parting ways, reminds us of Radiohead's The Bends and Coldplay's A Rush of Blood to the Head. However, while the songs reflect the influence of other artists, they do not come across as derivative. Jasper, who, with the aid of a backing band, built up a following in and around Rutgers University, performs most of the instruments and all of the vocals on this album by himself. It works fine and it's sometimes almost hard to believe that what we're hearing is not a full band. However, solid as the sound is, the real star of this album remains the songs themselves. Tracks like "Remembrance" and especially "Morning Kisses" are so catchy, you feel like you already know them (in a good way). Hopefully, this album has turned out to be that feel-good, not misunderstood, album that Jasper hoped he could believe in. If not, it's certainly good enough.

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