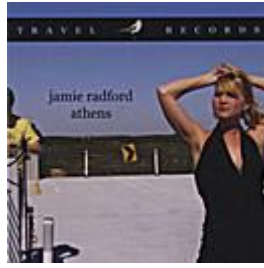


## Mp3 Jamie Radford - Athens



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Experimental rap music from Athens, GA. Combining traditional hip-hop with eclectic electronic sounds, Jamie Radford creates a unique, yet catchy and accessible blend of sounds. 12 MP3 Songs HIP HOP/RAP: Hip Hop, ELECTRONIC: Experimental Details: It seems strange that Jamie Radford would name his debut after the city he recorded it in, since not only does it bear almost no relation to Georgia rap produced post-ATLiens, but also because it feels positively placeless. A well-balanced sampler of excellent Album Leaf-esque instrumentals, eerie synth 'n' sample rap, and down-tempo chanteuse pop, its actually more similar to free-for-alls like UNKLEs Psyence Fiction or Prefuse 73s Surrounded By Silence. "King of the Classroom" is a risky starting point; though genuine and genuinely funny, it's goofiness belies the depth that follows. The "hustler gone tutor" tale takes on a greater gravity as the album unfolds with "Dumb Steps." Kanye Wests flippant attitude towards higher education easily resonated with thousands upon thousands of twenty-somethings cowering under mountains of student loans, so overqualified for their jobs that college actually did seem useless. But Kanye came from a distinctly middle-class viewpoint in a city that brims with possibility. Dumb Steps serves as something of a counter to the argument: Radford relates a lower Alabama upbringing, realizing that in the case of so many other places removed from real metropolises, college and crystal meth are the only escapes from menial jobs and the least glamorous drug dealing possible. Existing in the rare space between bitch-slap revenge and emo breast-beating, This Is a Breakup Song is an obvious standout. It combines an icy mbira and the loneliest guitar pattern possible into a cavernous, windswept atmosphere that owes as much to Martin Hannett as it does Juicy J. This is even more true of the closer, I Had to Let It Go, which screws an Interpol bass strum with icy string flourishes and a disembodied hook. As an MC, Radford combines Bubba Sparxxxs twang with Blueprints matter-of-fact storytelling, a distinct voice that leads us

through busted flirtation, shitty weed smoke, and mind-numbing office politics. The strands get tied together in the album's true centerpiece, the back-to-back duo of Never Give Up and Give Up. "Never Give Up" is a typically skewed take on the "I do it for the love" song. Optimistic without being mawkish, Radford confronts the hopelessness that so often accompanies listening to the radio and finds comfort in the creative process, suggesting others do the same no matter how few people hear it. One of the key lines is "I won't pretend it's going to be easy just to make it / It's near impossible, I tell you different I'd be fakin' it," transitioning to "Give Up." For decades, rappers bandied about the word "sellout" as if the only thing that separated you from yacht ownership was the willingness to rock a shiny suit. If only it were that easy. Give Up is the cold reminder that every day, transactions for one's soul take place for a far lesser price. (I used to say that you couldn't make me / Stay away from creating these beats if you paid me / But then somebody paid me.) It doesn't come off as self-pity so much as a chance to think of all the great art that could've been lost to the demands of bills, societal guilt, and dinner dates. He asks how can an artist survive unless he's blessed like an heir? which only increases in poignancy as Fat Joe and Jadakiss spit sixteens for Paris Hilton. ... Some may scoff and automatically label it emo-rap, but nine times out of ten, that's a defense mechanism against lyrics that can be related to rather than shamefully glorified for their otherness. With that in mind, like Blueprint's 1988, affability is an enormous strength of Athens. There's not much in common between "Henri Rousseau," a superb, glitchy collaboration with math-rockers We Versus The Shark, and "Dumb Steps" other than the fact that Radford's enthusiasm makes him easy to root for. He can take it anywhere from here, hopefully someday he'll get a mere fraction of the budget it took to stuff something like Blood Money or The Big Bang down our disinterested earholes. - Stylus Magazine

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