

Mp3 The Lemmings - Follow



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Power Pop Rock quartet with smooth, rich tones and storytelling lyrics that hit close to home. 10 MP3 Songs POP: Power Pop, ROCK: Modern Rock Details: Formed in the summer of 1998, The Lemmings can best be described as a Power Pop Rock quartet. Each of the members brings a creative and individual style to their art stemming from their eclectic personalities. "Follow" was recorded over 8 months at AudioLab Studios with Greg Marchak (Mighty Joe Plum) behind the console and mastered by Mike Fuller (Rod Stewart, Eric Clapton, Tina Turner) at FullerSound in Miami. The band chose to take their time to make a CD you would be proud to have in your collection. The disc contains 10 songs displaying the diversity and direction of The Lemmings music Well, how do you do? Follow, by Tampa Bay's the Lemmings, has me jumping up and down in glee that they are actually showing some pride in musicianship and seriousness in making it! (This is a rare occurrence in Tampa Bay, believe me!) What a lovely surprise! First, let me comment on the professional and beautiful CD cover art. Not only is it original and thought-provoking, but the entire packaging is very professional-looking and even better than what I have received from some of the major record labels! This alone tells me that the guys in the Lemmings are serious about this making-music stuff. Well-produced, full of big sound and sweet harmonious vocals. Right from the very first hit of the "play" button, the Lemmings grab your attention with eerie and sleepy cries that lead into the first tune, "Freedom," that lulls you into memories of the Verve (and I'm a HUGE fan of the Verve!). I like this tune a lot! Track two, "Undecided," hits you in the face immediately with a machine gun pounding of drums and then quickly sways into a ride of jangly guitar and more cadence from drummer Richard Belinc. "Alone," track three, doesn't let up, even a little bit, but continues with the same jangly guitars, picks up the speed a bit, and adds a swollen chorus of voices. The title track moves into a retrospective of the soul and contains what seems to be a hidden message, but anyone with half a

heart can figure this one out! "Follow" still grooves on its own but doesn't run up the speedometer like the two tracks that come before. "Desire," which falls in line behind "Follow," begins with a sweet, sad acoustic over-and-over, then mournfully speaks words of loss and letting go. "Time Well Spent" playfully swings along, but this is about the spot when the CD starts to slow down and gets a little monotonous. Rounding out this debut CD are the tunes "She Runs," "Jr. Mint," "Words," and "I Feel," which are all glorious compared to what I have heard recently from most local Tampa Bay bands, but still not as strong as the first six tunes. Still, six great tunes out of ten is nothing to sneeze at, nothing at all! Keeping my fingers crossed that the Lemmings continue on in their direction of tune number one with the Verve sound, and keeping my toes crossed that this band continues on with their excellent skills at recording and writing excellent tunes! Lee Ann Leach "Follow" (10-track CD, recorded at Audio Lab, Tampa, produced by Greg Marchak and the Lemmings, Eric Del Castillo (lead vocals, acoustic guitar), Michael Charles Kusheba (guitar), Richard Belinc (drums), Fish (bass) with Greg Marchak (percussion), Milton Chapman (keyboards), Namel Chabebe (congas), 44:26) If it were just for the sake of argument, it would be convenient to peg the Lemmings for being as docile and submissive as their rodent namesake. After all, the familiarity and comfort factor of the tunes that line "Follow" are a life lesson in pop chronicles. Merseybeat janglism, Cheap Trick's high energy, REM's organic musicianship and figurative imagery, as well as an acoustic/electric trade-betweeners that roots itself in Toad The Wet Sprocket are an ingenuous combination of sounds. Yet, whether it's the anguished loneliness that surrounds the haunting "Desire" or the excitable pop zealotry that explodes during the striking choruses of "Alone" (the song I couldn't recall when I interviewed them, but now I can't shove out of my head), Lemmings succeed in that rare capacity to instantly connect with an audience. Small crowd, large crowd, underground, or over-the-top, this Tampa quartet conveys complex, abstruse emotions of compassion and spirituality with a just few chords that make sense. Like the perplexing dark figure that pervades the hard rockin' "She Runs" ("You can't fight what's never real") or the wise, reassuring narrator of the title track, the lyrics seem to burst with secluded meanings. And although they find it necessary to plug their current work (a very proud first accomplishment), Lemmings are even more excited about future recordings and new directions taken by the band. On incredibly inhuman short notice, we interrupted the band during practice for a few questions. Focus: How did you put this project together? Rick: Well, it happened pretty fast once I quit my old band, Hello Joseph. I hooked up with Eric, who's responsible for most of the songwriting. We ran into Fish, who

passed a quick audition, who in turn introduced us to Michael. Eric: Actually, I've known Rick for about 17 years. We've been in and out of bands together, so I guess we've established ourselves together. Focus: Unlike a lot of other musicians in this groove pop realm, you guys seem to have a real handle on the songwriting. Rick: I think the current notion is to try to focus, or touch in on what's hitting on the airwaves right now. It sounds like a lot of the material that we're creating at this point. But with our slant on it, of course. (Our music) tends to have a lot of front end acoustic guitar, but with a nice mix of electric melodies tastefully thrown on top, and a downhome lyric that's going to mean something. It's music that's not overbearing, or one with a heavy crunch for a change. Focus: Are there specific bands you're trying to emulate? Eric: Well, I'm influenced by the bands I love, particularly Toad The Wet Sprocket. And even though I've gone through my metal phase, I like more of the folky spectrum. Rick: Really, we've tried to focus most of our songs on the lyrical content. Something that people can get in touch with. Sing-along melodies. That's the biggest thing that sticks in your head about a great radio song. It's not the killer bass line. For most folks, it's a song that they can dance to or sing along. Even our new stuff is a lot better than what we had been doing. We'd love to run out a record another CD, but we've got to promote and push this as much as we can... Focus: Are you happy with the outcome of "Follow"? Rick: We were very excited about how everything was handled at the studio. We went down to FullerSound in Miami to master it. (Mike Fuller) is a great guy! We didn't cut any costs with this. I think overall, we're all very happy with the CD. Focus: How did you end up choosing Greg Marchak? Michael: In the good old metal days, I was in a band called Blackwell. We did a record with him and were very happy with it. In my opinion, he's the best producer in this town. He's a little eccentric and kooky, but he definitely has a talent for hearing a song and directing the band to get the best out of the musicians. Focus: Is he versatile? I always thought he had a heavy metal background... Michael: He does all kinds of bands at Audio Lab. He did Mighty Joe Plumb, who got a record deal off of their album with him. He's probably done every basic genre of music ever recorded. Focus: What was the deciding factor? Michael: Well, we did look around for a while, but I had already known Greg. He knows the room and gear at Audio Lab real well, so that's where we went. Rick: He made us feel very comfortable, especially with his ability to relate to us on an easygoing level. There wasn't any pressure on us because we knew that he was able to get through all the problems and stumbles relatively quickly. We weren't going to be testing 300 drum mikes before deciding on the right one. Michael: Yeah, he already knows a good guitar sound and drum sound. When we told him what we

were trying to do, he shaped (our music) that way. He definitely had a lot of input in our final product.

Focus: Since there's such a distinct difference between the acoustics and electrics, how did you record this? Did you work off of click tracks? Rick: Actually, each song was different. We worked off of one click track, but me as the drummer, I was very uncomfortable. I'm sort of a free-flowing, off-tempo, make-everybody-mad drummer (laughing). Actually, about 70 percent of "Follow" are first takes. The easiest ones were the hardest ones. Then after that, we just built the foundation over them in the recording process- adding the bass and the electric guitar, then acoustic guitars and finally the vocals. Maybe some shakers or congas to add some spice. Eric: Honestly, most of the songs are pretty true to our live performances. Focus: How was the experience with Greg? Fish: I'd say you'd be foolish not to work with him. He's the best at what he does. Eric: I think the musicianship of Greg is what attracted him to us at first, but his personality really eases the tedium. If you spend a lot of time in the studio, you know it can be really draining. But he has a way of pulling the best out of you. Rick: Yeah, whether you're a veteran, or a first-timer, he really puts you at ease. If we were able to get a record deal, we would really fight to have Greg as the producer or co-producer, to be in the room with us. Focus: Is this a good market for the type of music you play? Eric: I think our style has started to pick up. This area has gone through a number of phases, from metal to grunge, and is now known for its punk market. Now that a lot of local bands are starting to become more experimental, we are starting to see a lot more pop culture acts. Everybody has been very receptive. Rick: Actually, we've been very determined lately to run this as a business, rather than as a typical, beer-swillin' rock band. Not only do we sit down as friends and musicians, but now as business partners, too. Right now, we've been looking at booking agents and management teams to handle our out-of-state inquiries. In fact, we had a team meeting the other day, so in about eight months we're going to quit our jobs and drag a trailer around the US. But we feel strongly that if you don't go out and physically chase your dream or go after what you want, it's not going to come to you. You can mark our words on that. In fact, we're selling everything. We're having a huge garage sale. Do you want to buy anything? Rick: Yeah, I've got 250 Hello Joseph CDs if you need one...

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