

Mp3 Ben Krieger - Drama Queen



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(2003) Rock band GunStreetRadio has been described as "Guided By Voices meets Fleetwood Mac."

This solo CD by GSR's primary songwriter, Ben Krieger, can best be described as "Guided By Voices meets Fleetwood Mac, loses Stevie and gets really, really sad. 21 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, ROCK:

70's Rock Details: From a recent press release: She'd bought the dress and they had picked out a sunny place in Atlanta for the ceremony, but by the following February, Ben Krieger could be found stumbling around the streets of Osaka, Japan, three sheets to the wind, with *Shoot Out the Lights* in his discman; the wedding was off. By late Spring, with about 50 more songs added to his catalog, 12 of them captured on *The Wasabi Recordings*, New York City began calling Ben back...and he bought the plane ticket home. Fast forward to the present: Ben is fronting the rock band GunStreetRadio (gunstreetradio.com) and touring up and down the East Coast...staying close to his roots with frequent solo acoustic performances, Ben is promoting his latest project, *Drama Queen*, and has won over many a heart in the NYC music scene he believes in. =====

From the Jersey Independent Music review: Genre: Singer-songwriter. I would even say "Asbury Park singer-songwriter", but for the unfortunate fact that Krieger isn't from Asbury Park. All of the elements of Asbury music are here: wistful, traditional folk-rock songs, a voice that sounds channeled from classic radio, insecurity, the winter wind blowing through the amusement park. Arrangements: Strummed acoustic guitar, lead electric, some bass, machine drums playing rock patterns, backing vocals at all the appropriate moments. Krieger knows the trick of making his electric sound like a pedal steel by rolling the volume pedal back and forth. Hey, it always works. What's this record about?: Heartbreak, romantic failure, feelings of inadequacy. Krieger's narrators all seem to be in the midst of breaking up, getting left behind, being spurned. They maintain tremendous humanity throughout, though, taking their blows with

dignity. Ironically, the key to understanding and inhabiting Krieger's perspective might be the one non-love song on this collection of twenty-one tracks: "Five-Foot Three", which finds the hero at a rock concert, unable to see over the perms and mullets of his fellow concertgoers. "If I had one wish...", sings Krieger, with a longing that can't be counterfeited. The stories play out against a New York City backdrop of bars, record shops, streets subways and apartments. But these narrators aren't partygoers or barflies -- they're just Manhattan citizens, hoping that a few extra inches might make all the difference. The band: This is song-presentation music. Krieger has stories to tell, and the instruments are supporting characters; outlines, really. The rock and roll drum programming is effective, even if the patterns feel pre-set at times. Some of the best songs, like "Jarrod and the January Girls", are just guitar and voice: strummed or twinkly patterns on the acoustic, ballpoint-thin lines of electric lead. The twin guitar logic might remind you of... The songs: The liner notes to Drama Queen end by letting you know that Mirror Blue is "now playing" in Krieger's house. Honestly, he didn't have to tell us. On a few of these songs, he's practically on a Vincent Black Lightning. But if you're going to wear your influences proudly, why not pick the best? If Drama Queen reads as a lo-fi version of the lighter side of Richard Thompson's Capitol records, well, that's not criticism, that's praise. This is traditional British and American folk-rock songcraft. Krieger has an ear for pleasing melodies, too, and the variations on his basic songwriting logic never sound reiterative. What distinguishes this record from other records of its genre?: If you're going to be in anybody's presence for over an hour, you'd better find them likeable. Krieger understands this instinctively -- or perhaps he doesn't need to. At any rate, he's a sympathetic writer, and manages to animate his characters with warmth, frailty, and humanity. The stretch of songs from "All My Tears" to "Jarrod The January Girls" is an arc of great beauty and poise. Recommended?: I recommend that everybody in Asbury Park (particularly Tommy Strazza, whose music Drama Queen sometimes resembles) extend honorary membership in the Jersey Shore scene to Ben Krieger. I also recommend that they drop whatever the hell they're doing at the Stone Pony and get Krieger up on stage to play "Denver". That room was built to air songs like this one. -- Tris McCall, Jersey Independent Music (full review at trismccall.net)

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