

## Mp3 Jon Auer - 6 1/2



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Singer/guitarist for The Posies brings you a collection of masterfully personalized cover songs, is his first solo U.S. release. 7 MP3 Songs POP: Power Pop, POP: Beatles-pop Details: The Big Takeover, Issue no. 48 #29 from Jack Rapid's Top 40 picks As covers go, three of these seven are remarkable choices! It is a fresh idea for the Posies and Big Star vet to forego the 60's psych-pop classics his band has covered (Zombies, Bee Gees, Hollies, Chris Bell, etc.) and instead turn his attention to his less-recognized, but just as extraordinary underground contemporaries. Still, credit Auer with mega bonus points for doing such sweet, light and pretty reworkings of shockingly enough: 1) his old Geffen labelmates The Chameleons' 1987 Strange Times opus/zenith "Tears" (Auer comes in right directly between the stunning original full band version and the lesser acoustic one); 2) Swervedriver's 1997 99 Dream ace "These Times" (again somewhere between the better version from the original LP turned in by the Oxford powerhouse that Geffen then dropped, and the later re-recording for the Zero Hour version); and 3) in one more bit of synchronicity, the same song Swervedriver leader Adam Franklin did last September at the Luna Lounge, Grant Hart's indelible Husker Du 1985 Flip Your Wig gem "Green Eyes." What tremendous taste! Jon Auer is welcome to play any house party any of us might throw! That they're all such nice versions makes this CD a good deal of fun. Of the other four, the instrumental of Serge Gainsbourg's "Bonnie Clyde" is nondescript, and Ween's "Baby Bitch" isn't much of a tune, but Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger" works a lot more as an acoustic-pop love paeon instead of an electronica-pop crossover. Likewise, the reverent, louder recreation of the Psychedelic Furs 1982 Forever Now classic "Love My Way" is more in line with the primo stuff, lulling and in some ways nicer with Auer's dulcet tones in place of classic Richard Butler's sandpaper voice. All in all, if this is what Auer wants to fool around with in his scant free time, we can only reply, "More please." - Jack Rapid Magnet, June/July 2001 Don't overlook 6

1/2 (Pattern 25), a covers EP from Posie Jon Auer. The most fascinating: a balladesque, waltzing take on Ween's "Baby Bitch"; the most unexpected catchy and reverent: a throbbing, power-pop reading of the Psychedelic Furs "Love My Way"; the most unexpected pleasure: Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger," done up for acoustic guitars, organ, and strings. Elsewhere, Auer tackles Serge Gainsbourg, Chameleons, Swervedriver and Husker Du. - Fred Mills Devil in the Woods, Issue 3.2 For Posies fans, Jon Auer's voice is as pleasantly familiar as grandma's apple pie. That's why it's so interesting to hear him lend his touch to these seven diverse cover tunes, including Ween's "Baby Bitch. The Psychedelic Furs' "Love My Way," and Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger" (which sounds stranger with every spin. An acoustic version of Husker Du's "Green Eyes," stripped to its core melody, is as beautiful as it gets. Not to be missed. - Frank Valish Amplifier, July-August 2001

Already this year we have had the likes of Mark Kozelek and Michael Carpenter proving the potential of all-covers recordings...now, we have Jon (Posies) Auer providing his own unique contribution to this "genre." Choosing songs that have already been given the full-bodied sonic treatment, Auer strips them down somewhat and layers a poignant sheen to interpret the same in his own distinctive manner. Most beneficial of this approach are The Chameleon's "Tears" and Husker Du's "Green Eyes," both of which are transformed into rustic and folky affairs that tug hard at the heartstrings. However, the piece de resistance is Auer's handling of Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger" (off the Austin Powers 2 soundtrack) with cello and mellotron-like synth. elsewhere, the moody ambience of Serge Gainsbourg's "Bonnie Clyde," the epic pretensions of Swervedriver's "These Times" and the rather sing-a-long quality of Ween's "Baby Bitch" earmark this EP as an item worth much more than its inevitable novelty value. --Kevin Mathews. Pitchfork Media, August 27, 2001

Jon Auer has given us a lot over the years: a long tenure as one-half of the creative team behind the Posies, yielding a dragon's bed of understated pop gems, and an equally promising burgeoning solo career, not to mention time served in the 90's version of Big Star. So when he feels the urge to indulge himself, I'm inclined to let him, especially when such indulgences come in the form of 6, a collection of unlikely covers selected and performed by Auer to be his post-Posies U.S. debut on his fledgling label, Pattern 25 Records. Starting out slow and spacy, Auer begins with the track that constitutes the "half" of the title, a nagging and surreal instrumental cover of Serge Gainsbourg's "Bonnie Clyde." While there's nothing wrong with the piece, per se-- with a short, looping phrase, it's the only keyboard-driven track on the album-- it's missing the one thing that makes most of the songs on this home-cooked project disc worth hearing: Auer's greatest

asset, his lilting vox. Maybe he realized that, assigning it merely half-song status. But Jon dives into the pop soon enough with nods to influential Brits. The Chameleons' "Tears" is a superb showcase for Auer's dolce voce but doesn't really improve upon the original. A serviceable cover of Swervedriver's excellent "These Times" follows. And while he does a fair job on each, I couldn't shake the notion that Auer was just warming up. He confirmed my suspicions. Perhaps the most interesting track on the disc comes next when Auer tackles Ween's vitriolic ballad, "Baby Bitch." Singing with such feeling, and from a source of loss in a personal relationship of his own (the conclusion of a nine-year marriage), Auer takes over the song completely, like a Martian pod. Cello and melodica lend a carefree drift to the track, in direct and stark contrast to the lyrics. Keeping his low-key vibe alive, Auer's take on Hsker D's "Green Eyes" was gentle and lulling enough to put my kid to sleep; likely the first time that's ever happened to a Hsker song. Singing with unabashed optimism, as well as respect for the original, Auer reincarnates Grant Hart's words and melodies with new life, into a new body. By the time he reinterprets the Psychedelic Furs' classic, "Love My Way," Auer's ready to plug it in and pick it up. The result is an undercurrent of chugging, muted distortion throughout the song that allows it to take root in a way it wasn't able to the first time around. On top of that, his croon matched with Butler's words is enough to make you second-guess the original. For me, personally, this is the highlight. Closing the disc, oddly and perfectly is a left-field take on Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger." In the hands of Auer, all the 21st Century Madonnaisms are decanted, leaving only smart melody, direct lyrics, and absolutely no mental images whatsoever of Austin Powers' shag-rug torso gyrating in a come-hitherly fashion. The nice thing about 6 is that each person who hears it will find a different standout; there'll be absolutely no consensus. All the covers are presented with an equal level of competence, lending a kind of two-way interactivity to the collection. You will connect with one (or more) of the songs on 6-- which one is up to you. Since a disc like this would never have a single in the traditional sense, that decision is as personal as the ones Auer made when choosing which of these baker's half-dozen favorites of his to record. -- John Dark Splendid, May 28, 2001

As half of the songwriting end of legendary power-poppers The Posies, Jon Auer has penned some gloriously catchy songs ("Solar Sister" and "Ontario" spring readily to mind). Rather than pull out the old notebook for this release, Auer has looked to his favorite artists, past and present -- not only for guidance, but for material. A collection of oddball covers, 6 shows Auer to be a performer of considerable depth and range. His version of Swervedriver's "These Times" is twice as pretty as the original (which is quite a

feat), while his rendition of Serge Gainsbourg's "Bonnie Clyde" takes the whimsical nature of the original and catapults it even further into wonderland. In Auer's capable hands, The Psychedelic Furs' '80s anthem "Love My Way" is transformed into a distortion-ravaged nugget of crunchy power-pop. Saving the proverbial best for last, he squeezes out a gorgeous, acoustic-led reading of Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger". By stripping away the studio sheen of the original, Auer uses the song's poetic lyrics to expose its broken heart. 6 is a gem of a record, once again proving that Jon Auer is one of the most underrated tunesmiths of his generation. - jj Pulse!, July, 2001

Posies songsmith Auer's solo excursion into covers terrain is a mixed bag, but the gems make it a worthy companion to Nice Cheekbones. What works successfully is Auer's acoustic take on songs by the Chameleons and Swervedriver -- he takes the insistent melody out of those bands' barrage of guitars and shows the songs can stand on their own. Auer's gentle version of ex-Husker Du drummer Grant Hart's "Green Eyes" is gooey, love-struck bliss distilled into three minutes of harmony and a few chords. Less successful are his takes on the Psychedelic Furs' "Love My Way" (no new insights) and Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger" (unremarkable). Still more confounding is Auer's decision to tackle Ween's "Baby Bitch" with its misogynistic lyrics ("fuck you, you stinking-ass whore"). Still, put these two EPs (along with Nice Cheekbones and a Ph.D) together and you have some of 2001's loveliest moments. -- Nathan Holmes The Olympian Newspaper, May 25, 2001

The Posies were one of the best things about the Seattle music scene in the 80s and 90s and they weren't even Grunge. Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow were the mainstays of the band and continue on as a duo under the Posies' banner to this day. Besides being part of the Posies, Auer has worked with a long list of other bands as both a musician and producer, some of those other bands include; the Minus 5, Love Battery, Pond, The Squirrels, and Truly. Last year Auer released the solo EP "The Perfect Size" and now he has chosen seven songs from other artists to cover. The songs come from such diverse sources as Serge Gainsbourg, Chameleons UK, Swervedriver, Ween, Hsker D, Psychedelic Furs and Madonna. The Serge Gainsbourg, "Bonnie and Clyde" piece is an instrumental and that, I suppose, accounts for this EPs title. Needless to say, everything here is up to the excellence you have come to expect from his legacy. Look for a solo full length later this year. - Tucker Petertil Orange County Weekly, June 14, 2001

Of the six songs on 6 1/2, his most recent EP of cover songs, pop craftsman Jon Auer thinks he best likes his version of Ween's "Baby Bitch." "I don't know -- I just relate so much to that song," he says before discussing the dissolution of his nine-year marriage. "Baby Bitch," a song about a shattered relationship,

manages to make the line "Fuck you, you stinkin' ass ho" sound beautiful. But the song's not entirely vitriolic. Well, maybe it is. But in Auer's hands, it's vitriolic in that semi-deadpan, bittersweet, nostalgic, gut-wrenching pop kind of way. Which is Auer's forte, really. It's the reason his cover of Madonna's "Beautiful Stranger" comes off as haunting and beautiful (and somehow surreal) instead of dancey and cheesy and Madonna-y. The Seattle resident, known for his work in oft-celebrated jangly pop group the Posies (who've repeatedly broken up and gotten back together and broken up again and now appear to be back together once more), claims there wasn't any sort of "grand motivation" behind his releasing an album of cover songs. "It was just something fun to do," he says. "I don't think a lot of people have heard these songs in these incarnations, and I thought it'd be fun to get in the studio for a week and see what I came up with. It's not anything I would base my career on." He pauses. "You know, there's always people who react differently to covers, like, Why would you want to do other people's songs?' There've been a couple of people who didn't take it in the spirit it was intended, and I felt like saying, Don't take it so seriously.'" Auer plans to record a full-length solo album in February and to try out many of the new songs on his upcoming solo tour (which is not technically solo: he'll be backed by a band that includes the current Posies drummer). To detail all the Auer-related releases would be laborious, but what the hell: there was that Posies release in 1988 called Failure and then another in 1990 called Dear 23 and then another in 1993 called Frosting on the Beater, which maybe you own and if you don't you should because it was one of the most perfect cassettes I owned in the days when I owned cassettes, and then there was 1996's Amazing Disgrace and then begins the segment of Posies history where they fuck with your mind. Success was released in 1998, and it was supposed to be the last official release because Auer and fellow Posies member Ken Stringfellow were sick of each other. Then they did the last official tour, but somehow, a live recording came out of that -- hence, 2000's Alive Before the Iceberg. Someone then came up with the idea for a Posies box set; meanwhile, Universal wanted to put out a greatest hits album, Dream All Day. Stringfellow and Auer played a benefit show together in 2000 and then came another album -- this time unplugged -- called In Case You Didn't Feel Like Plugging In. Then they didn't get back together, but they did -- or something like that -- and the EP Nice Cheekbones and a Ph.D. was recently released. Then there's his solo work and the other bands Auer plays in with various ex-members of the Posies, and it's probably worth mentioning that Auer and Stringfellow now play in Big Star as well. "It's so nice being able to go back and forth between all these different bands," says Auer. "It's almost like having

an open relationship -- it never gets stale." - Alison M. Rosen SLAMM - San Diego's Music Magazine, June 6, 2001

As half of the Posies songwriting team, Jon Auer has pumped out enough quality work to guarantee his band a position in the ranks of the Great Unheard Of's alongside Big Star and Husker Du. So it's not for lack of skill that Auer has left the pencil and paper behind, and opted instead to use the copy machine. Seven obscure covers by other unheard of's that Auer has twisted into his own sweet style. As he did on his demos in the Posies box set, Auer once again plays most of the instruments himself in true DIY fashion. The standouts are the terrific, stripped-down acoustic "Green Eyes" that compliments the original distortion parade by Husker Du perfectly, and a reworked, but still pretty familiar version of the Psychedelic Furs "Love My Way" shows how much the chorus in that song could actually rock. At the end of the disc, "Beautiful Stranger" will leave many of you wondering (I hope) "Is Madonna actually a quality artist?" Remember, Teenage Fanclub covered "Like a Virgin" back in the day. What's next? Superdrag covering "Cherish"? I think this joke has gone far enough. - Dryw Keltz Comes with a Smile, October, 2001

It's been somewhat confusing for Posies fans since the band supposedly broke up soon after the release of their last studio album 'Success' back in 1998. In fact they seem as active now as they ever did. Since the alleged break up, they have released no less than two live albums, a box set, a best of and most recently an EP of new material 'Nice Cheekbones and a PhD'. That's fairly prolific output under any circumstances, let alone from a band that theoretically no longer exists. It would seem that Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow's partnership is of a much more permanent nature than either of them could have realized when they first began working together back in the mid 80s. In contrast to Ken Stringfellow, who has kept himself extremely busy with extracurricular activities, both since and even before the Posies announced their split, Jon Auer has, through either choice or accident, maintained a much lower profile. '6' is his first release post-Posies to be released in the U.S. although an EP and single were released in Europe on the Spanish Houston Party label a year or so ago. Electing again for a work of shorter duration, this time a selection of cover versions of some of his favourite songs, '6' may be a relatively short, encompassing as it does just 7 tracks, but it's a major achievement in terms of quality irrespective of its brevity. The slightly ambiguous title refers to the number of tracks contained therein, with the '6' representing a fine instrumental version of Serge Gainsbourg's Bonnie Clyde. Jon Auer handles almost all of the instrumental duties himself on the diverse and intriguing songs he has chosen for the project. Featuring, amongst others, takes of the Chameleons Tears, Swervedriver's These Times, Husker D's

Green Eyes, and perhaps most surprisingly Madonna's Beautiful Stranger, which is arranged in mesmerizing style for acoustic guitar and cello, Jon Auer has adapted and transformed these songs to those of his own. This is an achievement that can be attributed as much to his warm and vulnerable voice as to the subtle rearrangements and changes of pace of the songs and if we were talking scores, then perhaps 6' would be a less befitting title than the more appropriate 10 would be. With the increasing regularity that the Posies seem to be either releasing music or performing live these days it's unlikely that they're planning to throw in the towel any day soon, which is a comforting thought, but should they do so a solo career for Jon Auer, on the basis of this fine collection seems poised for launch. - Geraint Jones

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