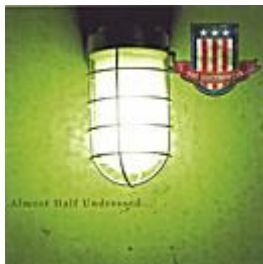


## Mp3 The Eisenhowers - Almost Half-undressed



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Literate, tuneful and punchy ... like Squeeze jamming with Jellyfish in Elvis Costello's front room. 12 MP3 Songs POP: Power Pop, ROCK: Acoustic Details: Focused on the songwriting of Raymond Weir, Scottish band The Eisenhowers have produced a debut album which sits nicely in the adult pop genre. Clearly inspired by the likes of Elvis Costello, Aimee Mann, XTC and Crowded House, Almost half-undressed features 12 literate, punchy and often thoughtful songs covering a wide range of topics, including sex, celebrity, love, money, serial killers and even parenthood. The tunes are mostly direct and guitar-driven, while Weirs vocals are pitched somewhere between the guttural Costello (circa Armed Forces) and the genial Glenn Tilbrook. The arrangements are tight and imaginative, while the production is always punchy and clean. There is a nice balance of light and shade, with plenty of neat harmonies and more catchy choruses than you could shake a stick at. Like the acts that influence them, The Eisenhowers are lyrically cute and this album exhibits a healthy dose of cynical humour. There are some nice throwaway lines, like you learn from experience that you dont learn much from experience from the marvellous 25 oclock, a would-be single with loads of musical reference points. Featuring retro synths, a disco bassline, crashing powerchords and harmonies straight out of the Beatles songbook, its simply made for radio play. Several of the songs appear to focus on dysfunctional characters. The creepy Plastic Jesus starts with a news story about a weeping religious figurine and ends up with a gun rampage, while Mr. and Mrs. Frankenstein features an insane celebrity couple filming a pop video in the jungle, complete with starving natives as the hapless extras. In a rant worthy of Mr. Costello himself, the song sneers at the dark heart of these showbiz kids corrupted by fame, power and cosmetic surgery. The bizarre guitar motif befits the whole absurdity of the situation: yes, you can be in my video, but just try not to breathe. In the acoustic Abracadabra Man, a sinister politician (described as another Napoleon selling snow to Eskimos) goes

door-to-door, signing people up for an unholy crusade. But for all the sardonic vigour (Becker and Fagen are clearly an influence), there are lighter touches too. If I had to make a list is a jazzy little song about parenthood which manages to avoid cloying sentimentality, while both the dreamy Useless Love and the atmospheric If satellites should fall extol the wonders of romantic infatuation, although in the latter, Weir cant resist a punchline about the star-crossed lover who, when staring up from solid ground is inevitably going to lose his way again. If this is, as their press release states, a compilation selected from two failed album projects, it will be interesting to hear what The Eisenhowers -said to have the second album virtually in the can- come up with next.

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