

Mp3 Benjamin Wagner - Crash Site



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"Extraordinary... You might just find yourself profoundly moved." -Vin Scelsa, WFUV-FM 8 MP3 Songs

ROCK: Modern Rock, ROCK: Acoustic Details: Summer's gone the moment a cool breeze blows off the ocean at sunset, chilling you to the bone. Summer's gone when pale gold leaves skitter down the road under the ever-waning warmth of the September sun; when shy fireflies dim in the encroaching autumn dusk. If you're talking music, "Summer's Gone" is also the dynamic first single off Crash Site, one of the year's more exciting, auspicious solo debuts from a gifted, young singer-songwriter, Benjamin Wagner. Entertainment Weekly dubbed Wagner a "fuzz-guitar blast" after catching one of the his many New York gigs, but voluptuous bursts of distortions and exuberant, jangling melodies are only half the equation. Like David Gray, Paul Westerberg, or Pete Yorn, Wagner knows how to churn up sultry, raucous, sing-a-long melodies. But he just as adeptly takes a more haunted, contemplative twist with tracks that are as dusky and cool as, say, the autumnal equinox. On Crash Site, Wagner's reedy vocals brazenly tumble through rave-ups like "Down," the tumultuous beauty of "Summer's Gone" and the breathtaking -- and heartbreaking -- "Dear Elizabeth." Mixed and produced by Steve Feldman (Queens of the Stone Age, Splendor), Crash Site is Wagner's 8-song road trip through the streets of New York, confounded and bemused by life, love and long-term plans. "I tackle some personal stuff in this record," Wagner admits from his Hell's Kitchen, New York apartment. "I've always just picked up my guitar to work out whatever's going on." Wagner's been working the New York club scene for several years and has garnered enough of a fan base to release several EP's. The limited edition, fan-only 1999 acoustic release Legend of the Evening Star, a compilation of unreleased demos and rarities, prompted R.E.M. front man Michael Stipe to dub Wagner "a future superstar". Other releases include 1999's rowdy Deluxe EP, recorded with Travis Pickle's Pete Min, and 1996's Out of Your Head. "My father worked for the EPA, so I moved around like

the stereotypical army 'brat'," Wagner says. Born in Iowa City, Iowa, Wagner lived in Washington D.C., Indianapolis, and Chicago, before his tenth birthday. After his parents divorce, Wagner, his brother and mother moved to Philadelphia. Growing up in the 80s, he vividly recalls getting his first transistor radio and listening, transfixed, to top forty radio stations in Chicago and Philly, loving everything from Hall and Oates to Phil Collins. But like James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus, Wagner finally had his defining, life-changing musical epiphany. "My big brother brought R.E.M.'s Reckoning home from college which immediately woke me up and snapped me out of my Phil Collins stupor," Wagner laughs. "Hearing 'So. Central Rain' for the first time changed everything." Reveling in bands like the Replacements and the Pixies (Wagner does a "twisted" cover of the Pixies' "Here Comes Your Man"), the young songwriter strapped on a Martin acoustic and began playing in bands in high school and later, at Syracuse University. There, Wagner fronted the funky -- and popular -- local alt.pop band Smoky Junglefrog, opening for majors like the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, the Samples and Dada. Following the bands' demise, Wagner moved to New York City and began playing a wide array of clubs like the Mercury Lounge, Arlene Grocery and Brownie's. Crash Site not only heralds the arrival of autumn, but the arrival of a singer/songwriter who writes beautiful melodies with a lyrical dexterity, honesty and insight that's sorely missing from much of today's contemporary pop-rock.

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