Mp3 Dennis Driscoll - Is It Love?



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"Is it love?" asks Dennis over and over. "I don't know what love is but I'd like to" he says. Hailing from the land of oysters and cranberry bogs to the south (the ocean town of Ilwaco, Wash.), Dennis appeared at 1998's KNW-YR-OWN showcase in Olympia wit 21 MP3 Songs POP: Beatles-pop, ROCK: Punk Details: Upon seeing this boyish looking man, normally clad in brown slacks but sometimes wearing an elaborate costume, perform most people's reaction or at least their first question is "Is this dude for real?" It's a fair question. Dennis Driscoll performances are fairly dizzying. Dennis plays the most naive pop songs I have ever encountered. His sweet, somewhat childish voice which can at times be more than a tad unsteady singing lyrics that seem to be composed by an 8 year old. The shows are also filled with very awkward banter or lack of banter. Somehow everything I describe adds up to incredibly enjoyable and heartwarming shows. Dennis Driscoll is from the southwestern Washington town of Ilwaco, Washington which is just over the bridge from Astoria, Oregon. Dennis has a great love for Ilwaco that finds it's way into a lot of his songs, including an amazing song about the Ilwaco High School basketball team. Dennis started playing shows at The Launchpad in Astoria and also recording songs. At some point in the lateish 90s Dennis moved to Olympia, WA and recorded his first album called Is It Love? with some different dudes including Phil Elverum (of The Microphones/Mt. Eerie). Is It Love? has a bunch of great songs of the innocent variety. I think rather than describing the vibe any more you might be able to get the picture better from some selected song titles: "Oh, Happy Day," "If I Were A Ghost," "I Like To Sleep," "Sad Dreams," "I Like Rainbows," "Monsters," "Apple Crisp," "I Like It," and "Grape Juice." Are you feeling the vibe now?? Yeah, I thought so. The album is full of great melodies, simple but very effective recordings, and the naive lyrics feel really refreshing to listen to a lot of times. Dennis has an intense obsession with Buddy Holly which has involved multiple trips to Buddy Holly's hometown of Lubbock, Texas and

suposedly friendship with some relative of Holly. On Is It Love? Dennis covers Holly's great "Everyday" and Holly's influence can be felt in the melodies guite often, which is a good thing. Dennis released a massive 31 song album the next year called Hello, Dennis Driscoll which is filled with more great songs, but can be a little long. Dennis' next grand statement came in 2002 when he fulfilled a dream of releasing an album on K records. He recorded Voices in the Fog with K record chief Calvin Johnson. Voices in the Fog is a great record. The productions are much more flushed out than on Dennis' previous two albums and it really works for the material. This album probably includes Dennis' best songs as far as song-writing goes that he has released. Dennis covers a song by Dear Nora, and Dear Nora's Katy Davidson makes a vocal appearance on the great song "Stormy Weather." The album also features guest spots from Mirah and Khaela Maricich (of The Blow). The album is a little less naive than Dennis' previous works and the added depth is really appreciated and appropriate for the added production. This album is probably my favorite that Johnson has been the producer for and that is really saying something as he has manned the boards for many many releases. Two more records (a full length and a split ep) by Dennis have been released since Voices in the Fog. but neither are a remarkable as Voices. The amazing thing about Dennis is that his persona as a performer of stumbling over words and insecure and mega shy and being the clown prince of effective awkwardness seems to be a bit of a put on or maybe it isn't that it seems like it is a put on, but that it HAS to be or you want it to be because that might make you feel better about Dennis. You don't want Dennis to be that shy, but it seems that he really is, because he never (well maybe very rarely) breaks from his awkwardness. Sometimes watching him play or if you have the opportunity to have a conversation with Dennis you want him to break his Andy Kaufman-esque character so badly, but it really doesn't happen and the enigma rages on. The whole package is amazing: wonderful melodies, a refreshing simplicity, a mysterious persona. Dennis is truly an enigmatic personality, and anyone who can stay in character for upwards of 7 years must be the Greatest Band of All Time.

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