

Mp3 Ben Arthur - Mouthfeel



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"The looks and hooks of John Mayer" -Rolling Stone 10 MP3 Songs POP: Pop, ROCK: Americana Show all album songs: Mouthfeel Songs Details: BEN ARTHUR If you're going to take some time off after two years of relentless touring, you might as well stay busy. Or at least that's what Ben Arthur thinks. But recording a follow-up to 2004's Sony/Red-distributed *Edible Darling* wasn't enough for Arthur. Writing a novel was something I had always wanted to try, so I just sat down and gave it a shot, Arthur says. It came as something of a surprise, then, when Arthur's first novel was greeted with such enthusiasm by the publishing industry. Suddenly I was having lunch with all these editors and agents. It was weird, the bemused author says. Arthur signed with prestigious literary agency Inkwell Management. Meanwhile Arthur was working on his new album, *Mouth Feel*, at Dubway, the same studio where he recorded 2004's *Edible Darling*. He had some great help on the songs, with guest vocals provided by RCAs Rachael Yamagata, and bass playing by Olla Belles own Byron Isaacs. Arthur also had production help from DJ Big Wiz, the beat master who adds so much to the music of Def Jux recording artists Aesop Rock and Lif. (In fact, Arthur and DJ Wiz are now working on another collaborative project now, a thus-far unnamed combination of the singer-songwriters lyrics, vocals and organic instruments, with the beats, loops and groove-tingling effects of the DJ.) It'll be interesting to get *Mouth Feel* out there in the world. We had such a wild ride with *Edible Darling*, Arthur says. Indeed, CMJ said of that record, Ben Arthur croons like Duncan Sheik if he had a pair effortlessly delivered and beautifully composed. From the moment the first song off *Edible Darling* hit radio Arthur experienced immediate success, as Mary Ann came in as the #1 most added single that week. It didn't hurt, too, that Chicago's WXRT had come out strong, adding the song a full two weeks before the official add date. There was not a cut off the album that failed to get airplay, with some stations reporting 30-plus spins a week. People kept telling me that Triple-A embraces

artists and not songs, but I have to say I wondered if maybe they all just meant to play Ben Harper and got confused, jokes Ben. That humility and clear-eyed honesty extends to Arthurs lyrics. Often brooding and dark-laced, images of betrayal, sex, humiliation, faith, yearning and death float behind a super-melodic pop facade. Tattoo an upbeat acoustic number, is about sex, love and suicide. Like much of Arthurs work, it looks mortality square in the face: Like Abraham, one day I awoke and realized/That along with the will, the hand, and the knife/The throat was also mine. Exit Wound shares similar themes, though in a more dark-toned bed. Yet, listening to The Sun Also Rises Arthurs impassioned duet with Rachael Yamagata you hear an uplifting message of hope and deliverance underneath the distorted electric guitars and driving rhythm. Maybe the critics like the duality in Bens music. Theres nothing in my work that doesnt smack of some pretty grim, difficult stuff, he says matter-of-factly. Most of my songs are a marriage of contradictions: bleak and difficult sentiments lurking under upbeat, melodies. Arthur first picked up a guitar when he was 14 and immediately began writing songs. In Charlottesville, where he attended the University of Virginia, he developed a local following, and eventually shared the stage with Tori Amos, Shawn Colvin, Bruce Hornsby and fellow townsman Dave Matthews. In fact, Matthewss collaborators Boyd Tinsley and Tim Reynolds played on Arthurs first album, Curses and Rapture. I prefer lush images, he says. I dont like songs that are too specific, too literal. What interests me is ambiguity and mystery, the spaces between the sentences. Like in Strawberry Fields: I mean, er, yes, well, no, that is, I think I disagree. thats the way people talk. Im most fascinated by the underlying contradictions in peoples motivations, the way they deal with one another. Dont hold me at arms length/Keep me sun-blurred and clean, he sings in Sestina. Arthurs music is alluring pop, but if you take a closer look, its not quite as pretty a picture, Pick up the pieces scattered resentments/From an old explosion/Grudges and barbs/All just mummary and gypsy fingers. Gypsyfingers is also the name of his second independently released effort, which came out in 2003. To complement his songwriting, Arthur says he likes to layer vocals and instruments to create a densely textured sound. So with all of this artistic work being done over the last two years, what is going to come out first Bodega, the new novel, or the unnamed collaboration with DJ Wiz? Well thats the six-million dollar question! laughs Arthur. Bens new studio album Mouth Feel will be released in the fall. Tags: pop

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