

Mp3 Jonathan Coulton - Thing A Week Four



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Well-crafted geek pop from the incredible Thing a Week series. Unspoiled, piping hot goodness, fresh from the muse. 14 MP3 Songs POP: Quirky, POP: Folky Pop Details: Summertime is Coultontime Summertime is Coultontime: and in Coultontime, summertime means Colchester, Connecticut, the Coulton homeland: long evenings out on the asphalt surrounding Hamburger Harrys, best known for its famous hamburgers dazed, sunblind afternoons wandering the wide aisles of the super stop n shop, breathing in the AC, poolside lounging at the old Coulton homestead surrounded by beer and good fellowship and small dogs with dental problems, and when the global warming kicks in, it means wandering back in to the cool house to the deathless gaze of a thousand menacing dolls. (See Creepy Doll within). By the time this summer rolled around, a lot had changed for Coulton since our first meeting in that Yale common room 1000 years ago (please see Falltime is Coultontime immediately), but in many ways we have returned to that room: back to those careless days, that perpetual summer of youth. By this summer of 2006, we had both left our jobs and are now gainfully unemployed! as a writer and imitation television personality, Coulton as a professional Internet songwriter a job title that, even as I type it, makes me laugh and laugh and then cry. But he seems to be making a go of it. And where the internet fails, roadtripping around the country has allowed Coulton to bring his tuneful message directly to his fans. Ive followed along, amazed at the passion of these fans he has never met, their willingness to fill a concert hall at a moments notice, their knowledge of the complete lyrics to Mandlebrot Set, embarrassing errors and all, and their skill at transforming innocent plush animals into half-pony/half-monkey monsters that range from the disturbing to the deranged. I am amazed by these fans, and then I slowly back away. Not because I am afraid of them (I am terrified), but because I know: Coulton doesnt need old Hodgman anymore. He doesnt need my cheerleading, my goading, my undermining advice. He has all that now,

and more, from others and that is as it should be. One time, in the car, we ended up having a talk about fame and its slipperiness and ultimate emptiness. I was making the point that Coulton's sometime reputation as a novelty songwriter put him in a category in which the apex of fame was embodied by Weird Al Yankovic (Coulton would prefer me to say Tom Lehrer, I'm sure, but he is dead and nowhere near as famous or as weird). And while that may seem depressingly esoteric, it's not nearly as depressing as realizing that, on balance, Weird Al is actually very famous, with major hits and a renown that reaches around the globe. Whatever fame had accrued to us now, as we drove from point to point in 2006, really paled in comparison to that of Weird Al's, when you considered it. And Jonathan patiently drove, uh-huh-ing me along on this point for a few miles when the phone rang. It was a radio station calling to talk to him on the air about his cover of Sir Mix-A-Lots Baby Got Back. And as he gave his interview, I realized he was happy. Yes, he was happy to have a break from talking to me, but happier still in a broader sense. Coulton doesn't yearn for fame, and he certainly does not want to be Weird Al. For indeed his work, as evinced within is far more than novelty songwriting. Outside the pigeonhole of smart, sometimes techie, creative commoned songs spread via podcast and internet meme, Coulton is impossible to categorize and for that reason, as he well knows, difficult to make famous by any traditional, Yankovician measure. But he is happy to find his listeners where he may, in person or via electronic device. And he is proud to be exploring what is, in fact, new territory for a musician's place where, unhurried by commerce, he could put his most esoteric interests into song, send them out blindly, and suddenly find echoes coming back to him, in fans, dollars, pony/monkey monsters, and surprising phone calls right out of nowhere from people wanting to put him on the radio. That made him happy. Happier than he's ever been. Then I noticed there was some confusion in his phone conversation. Oh, OK, he said. How weird, he said. I really had no idea, he said, and then he hung up. Turns out, he explained, they were interested in A DIFFERENT songwriter who had recently covered Sir Mix-a-Lots Baby Got Back. He put the phone down and looked at the road in front of us. Huh, he said. There were still many miles ahead, it was clear. But Jonathan just steered along the road, pushing on the gas (he is a notorious leadfoot, you know), and we drove on. I didn't bring up Weird Al again.

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