

NEW MUSIC CRITIQUES

Music Connection's executive committee rates recorded music on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 represents the lowest possible score, 10 represents the highest possible score. A final score of 5 denotes an average, competent artist. For more information, see Submission Guidelines on next page.



The Feud

Contact: thefeudband@yahoo.com, +44 7708 903 619
Web: thefeud.net
Seeking: Label, Film/TV, Booking, PR
Style: Alternative/Rock/Electro
A Username: thefeud

This Manchester, UK, trio is an electro-rock powerhouse that had us floored from the first note of "Rip It Up," a dance-friendly, cranked-energy tune that's radio-ready (though the band considers it a mere "demo"). Our favorite is "Searching"; its epic, expansive, lyrical profile, nice falsettos and catchy chorus make it an ultimate winner. From the sounds of the live-recording, "Mad," the Feud can generate monster energy—even in what's clearly a small club. It is an incredible sonic force that pumps the crowd to get crazy. And they do.

Production..... 9
Lyrics..... 9
Music..... 9
Vocals..... 9
Musicianship..... 9

SCORE: 9.0



Rachel Sierra

Contact: booking@xactproduction.com
Web: rachelsierra.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Booking
Style: R&B, Soul, Blues
A Username: rachelsierra

Sierra's rangey voice oozes sex appeal on deft tracks like "Jammin'"; a slinky dancefloor tune propelled by a funky bass and a pause/restart that is a great moment. The singer brings a rocking, guitar-driven edge to "Move," whose bold woodblock is a welcome, organic touch; she handles the quick-paced song with ease at each twist and turn. Sierra scats and shows a Chaka Khan influence on "Hypnotize" which epitomizes this artist's ability to balance myriad styles. Sierra has substance and complexity, but could use a drop-dead hit to break through.

Production..... 9
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 9
Vocals..... 9
Musicianship..... 9

SCORE: 8.8



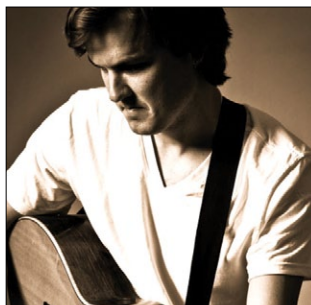
Brodyman

Contact: wcapt01@aol.com, 267-978-3195
Web: reverbnation.com/brodyman
Seeking: Label
Style: Rap/Hip-Hop
A Username: brodyman

We like how Brodyman raps to, not over, the beat on "Infamous." He obviously spent quality time on its post-production to get things synced, and featuring guest-singer Kenya Streets adds a sweet chorus to an eerie, hardcore track. "I'm the Shit" is familiar rap faire, lyrically, but the inclusion of Ms. Streets is again a winner. "A Child Is Born" is striking; the way this rapper addresses his newborn is both street-hard and poignant, and shows he's an artist of substance. Technically we advise him to clean up some of the muddiness in his vocal mixes.

Production..... 8
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 8
Vocals..... 8
Musicianship..... 8

SCORE: 8.0



Justin Carlson

Contact: brett@zodlounge.com
Web: justincarlsonmusic.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Management
Style: Singer-Songwriter
A Username: justincarlson

Carlson is a soul-searcher whose strong mic presence makes you believe in the solemn, mid-tempo "Fragile Heart," where the artist seeks common ground between love and hate. Cut from the same neo-country cloth, "Sweet Deception," "All I Have" and "Take My Hand," are expertly rendered with light distortion and supple support, resulting in an EP that chooses to dwell in second gear. Carlson's recordings are ideal for film/TV, and his words are meaningful, but going forward we'd like him step it up with fresher material.

Production..... 9
Lyrics..... 7
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 9
Musicianship..... 8

SCORE: 8.0



Day of the Outlaw

Contact: dayoftheoutlaw@gmail.com, 615-669-1193
Web: dayoftheoutlaw.bandcamp.com
Seeking: Label, Mgr, Distr., Film/TV
Style: Americana, Southern Rock
A Username: day of the outlaw

Guitar-driven Day of the Outlaw establish a solemn, downcast tone with the "Kryptonite"-like "Drink Her Wine," and they maintain that sound and vision with the haunted "The Honky Tonks Have All Closed Down," where Stewart Eastham's brooding vocal and Kim Lee's back-up voice make an affecting, lonesome blend. Guitar solos are crisp and classic-rock in style, and the band revs up their rockin' soul with "Too Many Women," which thumbs its nose at the Nashville club scene. More growth could turn this solid band into something superior.

Production..... 8
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 8
Musicianship..... 8

SCORE: 7.8



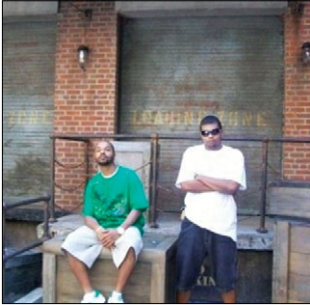
Joy Askew

Contact: patrice@septembergurl.com
Web: joyaskew.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Manager, Booking
Style: Songwriter, Folk/Rock, Indie
A Username: joyaskew

Definitely produced by the artist herself, these songs sound warm, deep and roomy, allowing her artfulness to wander in the dreamy, sleepy "Aao." Ostensibly about the "20 people who buy and sell the world," the song's oblique lyrics render that message elusive. That is also true of "I Broke The Law," but Askew is such an adept producer, that the lilting violin cadence, ethereal singers and ragtag salvation army band keep the song intriguing. "Drunk On You" is a straightforward look back at a derailed relationship. When it comes to art vs. commerce, Askew is clearly about the former.

Production..... 9
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 7
Musicianship..... 8

SCORE: 7.8



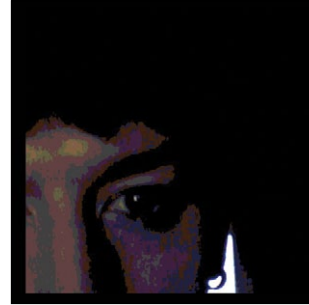
Green-Stamp/D-Shizzle & Lyrical

Contact: 941-328-2906, shizzleinfo@yahoo.com
Web: soundcloud.com/green-stamp
Seeking: Distr., Film/TV, Booking
Style: Hip-Hop
A Username: dax d-shizzle harris

Rap duo provide a nice beat to kick off their bootie call, "Girls." And we admire the way they rap with the beat. On this tune, however, as in the act's other work, they tend to ride it too long, letting the initial power of the idea grow tired. "Nucka Fucker Hata" has some spikey machine-gun-like effects that grabbed our attention. Clever sound samples are juggled and mashed on "Who She Fuckin," including vintage Atari-like sounds. Unfortunately, the tune's simplistic lyrics drag it all down. These two artists still have work to do to realize a coherent vision.

Production..... 8
Lyrics..... 7
Music..... 8
Vocals..... 8
Musicianship..... 7

SCORE: 7.6



The Nightbirds

Contact: thenightbirdsrock@gmail.com
Web: soundcloud.com/thenightbirds
Seeking: Label, Booking, Film/TV
Style: Alt-Rock/Progressive Darkwave
A Username: thenightbirds

UK darkwave band, the Nightbirds, revel in massive reverb and cold, remote vocals, exemplified by "Karma Love" which also gets progishly daring with a 9/8 time sig that doesn't quite come off. The uber-eerie "Obsession" has vampire flick soundtrack in its DNA, but could use a lift in its middle section to add interest. "Red Sky At Night" could also interest the bloodsucker crowd with its Eurosonic atmosphere and catchy chorus. Overall, this band is on to something, but is advised to boost the its demo recordings with a bit more sonic flair.

Production..... 6
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 8
Vocals..... 8
Musicianship..... 7

SCORE: 7.4



Dogs & Bones

Contact: dogsandbones@gmail.com
Web: dogsandbonesband.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Booking, Promotion, Distribution
Style: Classic Rock/Blues/Psychobilly
A Username: philcohen

With rootsy trio Dogs & Bones, Greig McRitchie's wailing guitar is the main attraction and the recordings all have a live feel, suggesting the band is an entertaining unit on stage. "Crosses" has a psychobilly surfbeat attack a la Rev. Horton Heat. Cali beach blues-rocker "Here For Her" has a gnarly guitar tone, a big fat drumbeat and a harmonica solo that's just the right move—and the "hoo-hoo" climax is fun! Ballad "Someone Else's Dream" shows McRitchie's voice lacks the baritone balls the song needs, but he can sure craft a beautiful guitar solo.

Production..... 8
Lyrics..... 7
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 7
Musicianship..... 8

SCORE: 7.4



Sandbox

Contact: 818-687-4637, shane@sandbox-music.com
Web: sandbox-music.com
Seeking: Film/TV, Radio, Booking
Style: Indie Rock
A Username: sandbox music

Fringe Fest vet Shane Sweet spearheads Sandbox, playing most of the instruments, and he cleverly gets the most out of basic musicianship. Sweet, whose *Speakeasy* project has recreated '20s era clubs, here affects a strangled, nasally vocal persona on his mildly hooky material. "Tried & True" reminds us of a stripped down Arcade Fire. "Doesn't Really Matter" employs a plinking piano in another low-key arrangement that allows the drama to build. While Sweet's voice is not for everyone, his alt-vision is consistently intriguing.

Production..... 7
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 8
Musicianship..... 7

SCORE: 7.4



Willie Ames

Contact: 520-229-7242, willie@willieames.com
Web: fb.com/willie.ames
Seeking: Label, Film/TV, Distribution
Style: Alt-Folk
A Username: willie ames

Earthy and organic, Ames goes against the grain while maintaining a pop sensibility on "Human Race," a song that muses cleverly and conjures an almost arabic aura. A darker tonality reigns (with a Primus vocal influence) on "Night Owl," which makes interesting use of harmonies. Perhaps better drum tracks would make this recording gel? The instrumental "Black Widow" deploys a fingerpicked banjo and a sitar-like twang that's ultimately appealing, suggesting this dedicated alt-artist could do an interesting score for the right indie flick.

Production..... 7
Lyrics..... 8
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 7
Musicianship..... 7

SCORE: 7.2



Lea Marie

Contact: Richard Swor, 917-747-2534
Web: leamariemusic.com
Seeking: Label, Mgmt, Booking
Style: Pop
A Username: leamariemusic

Artist Lea Marie has a knack for catchy choruses, like her Disney-friendly "Take Me For A Ride" and the Shakira-esque "Mi Chico Latino." Both have hooks that stick like bubble gum. "Undercover Lover" might be the catchiest of her dance numbers, fusing a Britney vocal style with a Madonna beat. While Lea Marie's lyrics fall short on substance, her piano-driven ballad, "In Another Life," suggests this artist might want to focus her strong voice on this more soulful kind of material. Perhaps collaborating with a lyricist will yield a breakthrough.

Production..... 7
Lyrics..... 7
Music..... 7
Vocals..... 7
Musicianship..... 7

SCORE: 7.0

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: There is absolutely no charge for a New Music Critique. We critique recordings that have yet to connect with a label or distributor. To be considered please go to <http://musicconnection.com/amp> and click on "Get Reviewed." All submissions are randomly selected and reviewed by committee.