

SINGLES >>>

CHARLENE "TAKING A DIVE"

The SharkAttack! label debuts with two extremely compelling tunes from slowcore space-rockers Charlene. Clearly, the heady excursions pioneered by Spiritualized had an impact on this young trio, as these songs display a keen grasp of both form (lazy, melodic drones and drifting bass tones, plus woozy vocals) and emotion (you can just sense that these guys have an orchestrally directed rock opera in 'em). [SharkAttack!, POB 2480, Jamaica Plain MA 02130]

—Fred Mills

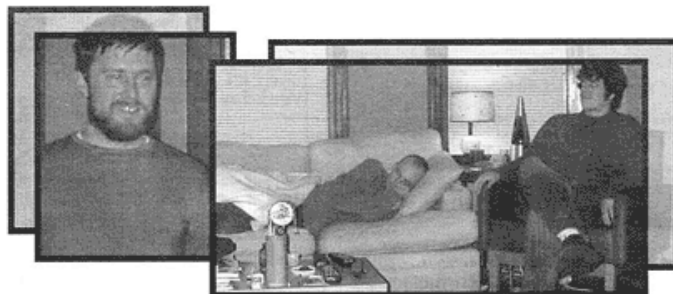
CHARLENE "NO FLY"

With its Stone Roses-esque, lackadaisical, echoed vocals licked 'n' stuck to a throbbing Jesus And Mary Chain riff, "No Fly" pits Massachusetts' Charlene against a whole mess of late-'80s/early-'90s British guitar bands in a pub-jukebox brawl. While Charlene hardly sounds like the fighting type, the group does manage to bloody up 90-pound-weaklings Ride before making its guitar-skree getaway. Meanwhile, the quivering, church-organ drone on b-side "Basement Songs" sounds like Spacemen 3's most shimmering, serene *Perfect Prescription*-era DMT trip. [SharkAttack!, POB 600-466, Newtonville MA 02460]

—Matthew Fritch

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SharkAttack!

Building an Empire...One Record at a Time.

It's the ultimate DIY business model: a label run by a band that records their music at their own studio and then puts it out on the label. Their self-reliance extends into almost every arena of the music business—from promotion and cover art to layout and web design. After a handful of singles, SharkAttack! Music is about to unveil the most recent fruit of their labor—their first compilation.

Label heads Matt Miranda, Ian Lawrence and John "Randy" Rex also play in the band Charlene, whose first three singles were released on SharkAttack! More than a mere vanity label, SharkAttack! is a self-styled specialty-imprint for atmospheric slow rock, encompassing Charlene's lush dream pop, the "basement beats" of Compass, the spacious instrumental extrapolations of Hello Attack and the folksy melodies of Lockgroove. The label's latest release, *3.Seps*, brings all four bands together on a twelve-track CD.

Charlene and I have convened at drummer Ian Lawrence's Allston apartment over cans of Miller High Life, and Randy (guitar/bass/vocals) has taken it upon himself to man the sofa—albeit in a prostrate position—for the duration of our conversation. Mercifully, he's mustered up the decency to refrain from snoring while we delve into the finer points of SharkAttack!'s self-contained, all-inclusive DIY empire.

SharkAttack! Music is a family affair—or at least a close-knit musical community. Randy's twin brothers Martin and Ryan play in Lockgroove; Ian's girlfriend, Kelly Ferguson, plays bass in Hello Attack; Compass is the solo project of Lockgroove's David Goodman. All four bands will share the stage at TT's this weekend for the compilation CD release show. "It's cool to set up a show with your friends—who also happen to be in bands you like—rather than trying to sweat the Middle East for an opening slot with some national band," Miranda says.

Most of the material on *3.Seps* was recorded at SharkAttack!'s Dented Head Studios in Newtonville. Having seized the means of production, the bands have saved themselves a considerable amount of pocket-change in hourly fees and enjoy the convenience of leisurely studio sessions. It's like Motown Records, minus the lawsuits. "When you own your own studio," Miranda explains, "you don't care about spending ten hours on something horribly outlandish. When you pony up

a bunch of bucks to go to Q Division—as great as those albums sound—it's like, 'Take three—don't fuck up.'"

Miranda—who also plays bass and guitar in Charlene—has been involved with one record label or another for the past several years. His career in the record business began with an internship at Virgin ("back during that summer when MTV was cool"); he later became one of the co-founders of Sugar Free Records, purveyors of Wheat, Jack Drag, and other such indie staples. "What I liked about Sugar Free was that for the first couple of releases at least, we really tried to make everything count," Miranda explains. "We did this package for one of our records that was this pyramid foldout, no glue involved, all letter-pressed, all hand-done...the kind of thing you see on the shelf in the record shop and can't resist picking up. That was a total lesson for me."

It's a lesson that SharkAttack! has clearly taken to heart. The design and layout for the *3.Seps* was conceived and executed by Ian Lawrence, and is the pinnacle of modern minimalism—the heavy stock sleeve is so clean and white that you're afraid you'll get fingerprints on it. The idea, Lawrence explains, is that the potential customer will "hope that we've paid as much attention to the music as we did the packaging."

The good news is that anyone not familiar with the four bands on the compilation will, in all likelihood, be pleasantly surprised at the sounds within. Those with the tendency to buy records they've never heard of simply because the packaging is so unique: welcome to SharkAttack!'s target market. Says Miranda, "I know what it's like to walk into a record store, see a record, and be like, 'I bet this thing is rad,' and pay the money, go home, play it and be psyched—because it is rad, and now you've heard this band that nobody knows, that you picked up on a gamble—based on the way it looked and felt—and now it's paying off."

—J. Bennett

The *3.Seps* release party will take place at TT the Bear's on Saturday, Jan. 26, 8:30/18+/\$7. The lineup will be as follows: Compass, Hello Attack, Charlene, Lockgroove. For more info, check out www.sharkattackmusic.com

photo / J. Bennett

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