

MAGNET

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CHARLENE

Charlene

Charlene sounds like a lot of my favorite bands happening all at once. Which isn't surprising, since playing what we call "space rock" and/or "dream pop" and making it sound different than anyone else playing such music is fairly impossible. That said, this Boston trio does an OK job. The affectations the band has snagged from like-minded peers and predecessors (My Bloody Valentine) are clearly visible, but the way Charlene fucks 'em up a bit is right clever. Think a more sluggish New Order with a whiskey hangover ("Ripoff"), Love And Rockets in a much better mood ("Cathode"), Galaxie 500 but both intelligible and hummable ("Shoot Yr. Life") or Neil Halstead's as-yet-unformed 39th Slowdive spin-off band (entire album). Oh, and one song ("Shot Down") sounds eerily like Death Cab For Cutie with Kevin Shields on guitar. Weird. The point is, just because it's been done before doesn't mean it's being done badly. Black Rebel Motorcycle Club takes shit for sounding like the Jesus And Mary Chain and Interpol for sounding like Joy Division, but people still buy their records. [SharkAttack!, www.sharkattackmusic.com]

—Beth Wawerna

Fun Fact:

So far, Charlene's debut has been compared in print to: Spiritualized (8 times), Jesus & Mary Chain (8 times), New Order (3 times), Her Space Holiday (2 times), My Bloody Valentine (2 times), Notwist (2 times), Spacemen 3 (2 times), Yo La Tengo (2 times), Galaxie 500 (2 times), Velvet Underground (2 times), Versus, Belle and Sebastian, Mick Turner, Low, Love and Rockets, Neil Halstead, Mojave 3, Death Cab for Cutie, Bedhead, Kinks, Stephen Merritt, Placebo, Hopewell, The Poster Children, Ride, Catherine Wheel, Radiohead, Sara McLachlan, Flaming Lips, Nine Inch Nails, Mazzy Star, Interpol, Sigur Ros, & Monster Movie. While we feel comparisons bear little testament to the quality of Charlene's music, we also realize they are the bazooka in the Music Critic's formidable arsenal and thus likely to be used in times of dire need. Given that fact, may we suggest these as-yet-unused references: Sly and the Family Stone, Public Enemy, Mc Shan, Swirlies, 18th Dye (see bio), Red Red Meat, DEVO, Unrest, The Clash, King Tubby, Beatnik Filmstars, Ennio Morricone, East River Pipe, Kyuss, Wheat, Godheadsilo, and of course you can always hang your hat on The Beatles.



CHARLENE

Album > Charlene

(SHARKATTACK!;

www.sharkattackmusic.com)

Who? D.I.Y. trio who recorded, designed and released this full-length on their own label.

Sounds like? Lush and lulling indie rock that incorporates a wide range of timbres without sounding muddy.

How is it? Not the record to listen to when your getting ready to go out, but its minimalist meanderings are the perfect way to help nurse the morning-after hangover.

Kindred spirits: Belle And Sebastian, Mick Turner, Low

BLENDER

NOVEMBER 2002

CHARLENE

CHARLENE ★★★★★

SHARK ATTACK

Ambitious, Anglophilic shoe-gazers mold sonic overload into warm, affecting pop

Charlene call themselves a three-piece orchestra, and it's not hard to see why. The Boston group's self-titled debut piles guitars upon guitars upon keyboards upon drums upon electronic effects upon *even more* guitars, creating a lush tapestry of swirling dream-pop evoking classic British shoegazers Spiritualized and the Jesus and Mary Chain. *Charlene's* hypnotic centerpiece — an untitled seven-and-a-half-minute instrumental — features a lone guitar picking out a twangy melody as a wall of fuzz advances and recedes behind it. On "Stunner," their noisy feedback yields a cheery jingle tapped out on a xylophone. Such sonic weirdness abounds here, but somehow, Charlene turn brooding art-rock into pure pop candy.

DAVID PEISNER

THE SCORE

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK