



Charlene

The members of Charlene lead double lives. When they're not writing, practicing, or playing live, they're recording their music (and that of their friends) at their own studio and releasing it on their own label. Matt Mirande, Ian Lawrence and John Rex are both Charlene the band and SharkAttack! Music, the label. Their dual existence isn't so much clandestine as it is pragmatic.

SharkAttack!

In the spirit of Discord, Elephant 6 and Definitive Jux, SharkAttack! Music is an artistic collective and record label with an honest, mutually beneficial business model. In addition to Charlene's first three seven-inches and self-titled debut, SharkAttack!'s back catalog includes the lauded 3.5eps, boasting the myriad musical talents of fellow Bostonians Compass, Hello Attack!, and Lockgroove. As the co-founder of

Sugar Free Records (purveyors of such notables as Wheat, Beulah, Jack Drag, etc.), Matt learned a few things about the independent record business; he has since parlayed his expertise into the beginnings of yet another modest indie empire.

Charlene:

What began as a 4-track tape-trading session between friends who wanted to see how much of a racket two people (Matt and John) could make has since blossomed into a sophisticated, electronically enhanced three-piece orchestra. Recorded at the band's own Dented Head Studios in Newtonville, MA, Charlene's debut full-length reveals a deep, deliberate aesthetic that seems to be present in all aspects of SharkAttack!'s projects. Indeed, when one has the luxury of one's own studio, time is no object, and the realization of one's sonic ideals suddenly becomes possible. Or at the very least, that very elusive concept – Total Artistic Control – becomes reality. No clock-watching producers, no looming delivery dates, no coyly suggestive label reps, no sweaty "do or die" third takes. The other side of that coin is that everything you hear is exactly as Charlene wants it to be, and they make no validations or pretexts for the contents therein. In short, it's the way things should be – and, in all likelihood, the way more and more modern music will be made. DIY: Yeah, that means they did everything themselves, from the music to the recording to the actual design and layout of the finished "product" you hold in your hot little hand right now. (Okay, so they didn't master it – Jeff Lipton at Peerless did – but other than that, it's a totally in-house project.)

You'll no doubt be delighted to discover that Charlene's music is suitably conducive to both active and passive listening; comparisons, if you must have them (and if you're going to make it past this piece of paper, you'll probably want some), hover somewhere in the indefinable spectrum straddled by Yo La Tengo, 18th Dye, The Jesus and Mary Chain and Notwist. Incorporating samples and pre-recorded ephemera along with traditional instrumentation (guitars, bass, drums, keys) Charlene's members typically switch instruments mid-show (Ian has been known to abandon his drum kit for keyboard detail while Matt and John trade off bass and guitar duties) as further emphasis of the collective nature of their creative aggregation.

(Here comes the part where Charlene rides piggyback...) Live demonstrations in conjunction with such renowned outfits as Bedhead, Low, Elf Power, Fridge, Her Space Holiday and American Analog Set – not to mention a performance at 2002's SXSW Music Conference – have only served to magnify Charlene's profile amongst those within the accompanying circles, and their full-length debut serves as further documentation of their deftness with atmosphere and mastery of their sonic palette.

At this point, it's probably safe to assume that you've read enough of these things to know that words cannot replicate – or accurately describe – any kind of stereo-based experience, so here comes the part where you recycle this document and get on with the audio portion of today's program.

Enjoy.

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