

ALBUM REVIEW

# WHO LOVES LOVE?

NEIL JAMES  
opinion editor

On Valentine's Day this year, the alternative rock band Angels & Airwaves (AVA) released their latest studio album, *Love*. It is free for download off of AVA's website. The album unfortunately eluded publicity since it was not released in stores or even as a CD.

Back in 2005, when the group's first installment, *We Don't Need to Whisper*, hit the shelves, Tom DeLonge (frontman singer) claimed that AVA was going to change music forever. Though that is a pretty lofty statement to make, the band did create a sound all their own, winning lots of respect and fans in the process.

Their second album, *I-Empire*, expanded on that uniqueness, and steered the band in a more progressive direction.

So the question remains: how much love should we give *Love*?

From a musical stand point, *Love* is a solid album. It maintains the style of the previous installments, but doesn't really expand upon it. In most cases, it feels like the old songs were simply recycled and given a new label. Not to say that the songs are any worse, it's just that they're just the same. The album will most likely be loved by currently fans, but it probably won't win AVA any new ones.

The CD isn't necessarily bad; it just isn't any-

thing new. Old fans will most likely enjoy the album and those who are curious will be able to hear what's been going on over the past five years. The best way to think of *Love* is as this image: AVA laid a new foundation with *We Don't Need to Whisper*, then proceeded to build an aesthetically pleasing stage with *I-Empire*. *Love* is simply a free concert on that stage. Nothing new happens, but it gives new fans a decent starting point.

The lyrics do fall short of expectations at times, making blatantly obvious statements about love and connectivity that anyone who survived high school could make. At points, AVA seems so hell-bent on being philosophical that they simply try too hard and sound corny.

When they fall short of lyrical excellence, however, they make up for it with instrumentation. Singles like "Letters to God, Part II," and "Epic Holiday" showcase AVA's musical skill. Drummer Atom Willard takes the crown as *Love*'s MVP, driving the songs forward into their classic upbeat-melody, though DeLonge's and David Kennedy's U2-esque guitar work is nothing to scoff at either.

Overall, *Love* is a solid CD. It maintains AVA's cheery and positive style, making it difficult to really dislike the album. Though it doesn't break new ground like the first two installments did, *Love* makes for an enjoyable experience for any listener.

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# Nobody does it like Sean Kingston

DAN KINEM  
senior reporter

Sean Kingston is true at heart. His lyrics are simplistic at best, but in this case simplicity is best. They aren't forced. They came across like each word that is written was the very initial word that was thought. No one word took more than a millisecond to write.

His lyrics come across as being true to who he is and what the general population wants, whereas in the case with most artists it is the exact opposite.

He isn't intelligent. He loves girls; that is obvious. He likes his iPod. He likes singing about girls.

It is as simple as that. But therein lies his genius. He doesn't try to write catchy lyrics, they just come out

that way. Thoughts that people would over-think and therefore forcefully write aren't found on a Sean Kingston record.

Whatever he thinks, he says. It doesn't have to rhyme or have a flow or even necessarily fit the song's structure.

His metaphors could have been written by a toddler. "You are the gun to my holster" comes to mind immediately.

From lines like "Got my soldier suit and my Timberland boots/Girl I'm down for whatever cause my love is true," to "Doin things I never do/I'm in the kitchen cookin' things she likes," he shows how straightforward and uncreative real music should be.

He literally sings exactly what is happening, stuff like, "I met you in the mall,

you was with your friends," or a personal favorite, "One of a kind/But you mush up my mind." A true musical artist puts no thought into the music they are making.

A true musical artist just makes it.

In a song where the chorus is "It's like my iPod's stuck on replay," do we really need the line, "She like a song played again and again?"

No. Does Sean Kingston care? You better fucking believe he doesn't.

These facts are the reason that Sean Kingston's music is the realest music on the radio today or possibly ever. He can alter his voice with auto-tune, he can be faking his accent, and he doesn't even have to be the person actually writing his music. Because shawty, Sean Kingston just is music, through and through.



SEAN KINGSTON



SEAN KINGSTON

Album art from jamaicanese.com / wikipedia.com / http://www.appliedlanguage.com/flags\_of\_the\_world/flag\_of\_jamaica.shtml

MUSIC

# STROLLING SOUND: SHE & HIM

NATHAN CARTER  
staff writer

Side projects are ways for artists to expose their own original side in creating a new personal band expression.

Years ago, Maynard James Keenan from the band Tool created a side project named A Perfect Circle. Then Modest Mouse's Isaac Brock made Ugly Casanova. And recently M. Ward joined with Zoëy Deschanel to form She & Him, an indie/folk duo with straightforward jazz-inspired vocals by Deschanel. These are severely varying examples of side projects, but they all worked to gain popularity for the artists involved, exposing what the artists couldn't or didn't do with their original projects.

Each side project brings a different element to the table.

In terms of Keenan, A Perfect Circle was able to maintain political meanings and

rhythmic trance-like chants that simply wouldn't make sense in the heavy-inspired longevity of Tool's material.

With Isaac Brock, Ugly Casanova was a way to "alleviate boredom and eliminate himself from the band [Modest Mouse]."

However, the band's website outlines a history of the band that began when a fan of Modest Mouse in Denver named Edgar Graham played some of his material for them.

Brock took an interest in the strange man's work, covering some of Graham's previously unknown material and combining it with his own on Ugly Casanova's *Sharpen Your Teeth* album.

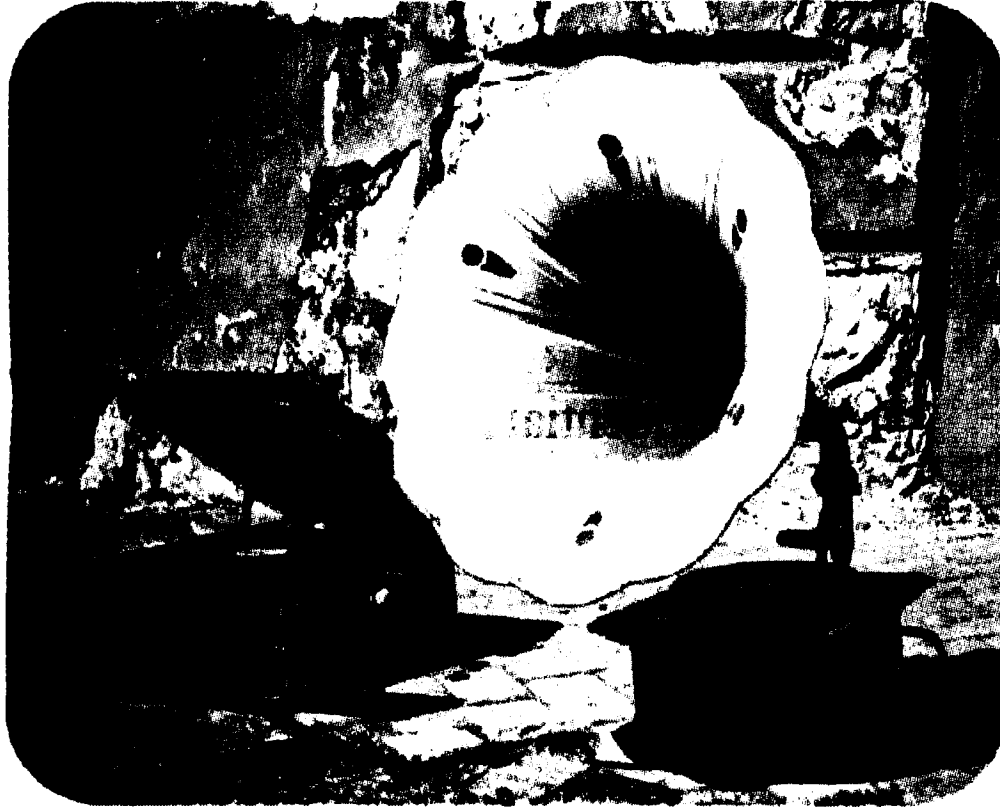
As far as Deschanel and She & Him are concerned, the band was started by musician M. Ward after discovering Deschanel's singing prowess from her film roles in *Almost Famous* and *Elf*. He found that

she had already written and recorded years worth of home material but was nervous to send it out.

Upon their collaboration, Deschanel's spontaneous personality on stage and in studio evolved from her original nervousness, and they created their first album in 2008 called *Volume One*.

Her vocals and lyrics have a breezy pop quality that is eerily reminiscent of a modern Patsy Cline, and in combination with Ward's strongly blues-inspired guitar patterns, they create some of the most original music I've heard in a while. *Volume Two*, their newest album, was released on March 23, and you may still be able to sample the majority of the album on NPR's website.

Deschanel continues the Patsy Cline sound she began on *Volume One* with the tracks on *Volume Two*. The song "Thieves," a take on a new age



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indie ballad, outlines a couple where the girl is dealing with her tendencies for traditional love versus her boyfriend's new age love. Throughout the lyrics, you sort of get the idea that the boyfriend is a thief, essentially the idea of the "bad guy."

Fortunately, this isn't the only example of narrative-based lyricism that I hear on the album, which isn't always the case in recent indie bands.

The track "In The Sun" has this amazing trance-like feel and it ends with a great blues-inspired solo by M. Ward.

"Ridin' In My Car" and "Brand New Shoes" details a "this cool new girl" subject, which is what I presume Deschanel would create.

If you're looking for a new sound, specifically an original "strolling" sound, then She & Him is the way to go.

CAMPUS CULTURE

# MUSICA PACIFICA

## "DANCING IN THE ISLES"

Baroque Ensemble Musica Pacifica performed in McGarvey Commons Tuesday afternoon. This was the final performance in The Logan Series for the 2009-2010 school year.



Jeremy Korwek / The Behrend Beacon  
Musica Pacifica Baroque Ensemble

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