

entertainment

'Chuck' remains an NBC favorite

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In NBC's series "Chuck," a nerdy computer expert plays the heroic protagonist after unexpectedly becoming the greatest asset to U.S. national security.

"Chuck," currently in its second season, airs Monday evenings at 8 p.m. and features a diverse set of characters, who range from secret agents, to doctors, to minimum-wage-earning employees at the local Buy More, an electronics store.

The hero of the series, nerdy but humorously witty Chuck Bartowski (Zachary Levi) leads a double life as a Nerd Herd employee for the Buy More and an undercover secret agent the CIA and the NSA refer to as "the intersect" because he knows all the U.S. government's secrets after opening an email from a CIA agent and former friend.

Chuck lives with his sister and her boyfriend and dates CIA agent Sarah Walker (Yvonne Strahovski) as a cover. Despite the relationship's false pretenses, Chuck and Sarah have real

feelings for each other, but Sarah must keep her feelings at bay in order to successfully protect Chuck. Levi and Strahovski make the forbidden romance believable with an intense spark that exists between their characters, whether acting out a scene at the Buy More or one with guns pointed at their heads.

NSA agent Major John Casey (Adam Baldwin) works undercover as a salesman at the Buy More to protect Chuck. Baldwin plays the stereotypical secret agent--tough, strong, sarcastic and sometimes unemotional

and insensitive--but is also able to convey his eventual fondness for Chuck.

"Chuck" follows a basic outline in every episode, which can sometimes make the show predictable, despite its small surprises.

Every episode begins with Chuck "flashing," or triggering national intel, on something in his daily life. Chuck's "flash" then triggers a CIA/NSA investigation where Chuck must go undercover as a spy with Sarah and Casey. While the three are on either a stakeout or a mission, Chuck typically compromises himself and others and makes an already dangerous situation more threatening. Then Chuck heroically, if reluctantly, saves the situation in a clever and unconventional way.

While "Chuck" can be predictable, it is full of little twists and turns, such as people from Chuck's past showing up in unusual places and missions requiring Chuck to go undercover

in unfamiliar situations.

The punch line of this comedic action series is that a computer nerd is secretly saving the world. Levi adds to the humor by portraying Chuck with perfect combination of awkwardness, wittiness and generosity.

Chuck's friends at the Buy More exist mainly for comedic relief. They are stereotypically video-gamers whose lives revolve around the Buy More and the latest technology. With good acting, the Buy More characters are distantly reminiscent of "The Office". Humor from the Buy More is less subtle than from "The Office" but still contains many funny, awkward moments.

Despite the predictable plots of "Chuck" episodes, every episode is sure to contain plenty of secret-agent action with Sarah and Casey and plenty of laughs with Chuck and his Buy More friends. It certainly makes viewers rethink their opinions of the nerds fixing their computers.



Photo courtesy of Hulu.com

Gnarls Barkley has souls to save

By JENNA DENOYELLES
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Gnarls Barkley asks who is going to save their soul as the group releases an EP remixing the song "Who's Gonna Save My Soul" from The Odd Couple. Along with the four different versions of the song, the EP includes a live version of "Neighbors" and a new song, "Mystery Man."

"Who's Gonna Save My Soul" is the second song on the album "The Odd Couple," which released only eight months ago. The lyrics are universal: "I got some bad news this morning/Which in turn made my day/When this someone spoke I listened/All of a sudden, has less and less to say."

This song is a passionate account of a time when we all wonder 'who is going to save my soul?'

The demo version is dream like. Soft guitar in the intro then the chorus breaks into a trance using synthesizers. The instrumental version is also good. Not bad background music. It flows. The fluidity makes it easy to concentrate on other things while listening to it. Even without lyrics the song is still pretty enjoyable. The album version and a live version are also included.

The best part of the EP is the new song "Mystery Man." Seriously, this song is great. The lyrics are deep and can

resonate with anyone: "I may be a mystery/ but I'm mostly a man / If I can't do what you want me to/ then just let me do what I can," and "See I'm a lover and a fighter/

there's only been once or twice that I ran."

Good lyrics are complimented by good music. The jamming melody of the guitars, humming

of distortion, and Cee Lo Green's soulful voice adds punch for a powerful effect on the song. "Mystery Man" is half vocal and half instrumental delight. Gnarls Barkley's music is comparable to Fatboy Slim, Moby, Stereo MC's, Royksopp, Gorillaz, Radio Citizen and others.

Though, this album is not for everyone. Not everyone enjoys a remix of one song four times on the album. The new song is great, but the alternative is just purchasing the song individually rather than the entire album. Plus, not everyone digs experimental soul music or bands with commercial success.

Gnarls Barkley is Danger Mouse and Cee-Lo Green. "Who's Gonna Save My Soul" can be heard for free on their Myspace for free at: www.myspace.com/gnarlsbarkley. The EP can also be purchased on iTunes for only \$4.99.



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