

2018

Charly Bliss - Guppy

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Jordan Gibbs (2018) is pursuing a degree in Geosciences.

This article was written as part of the curriculum for the Bachelor of Music in Music Management and the Bachelor of Science in Music Industry Studies at University of the Pacific. Each student conducted research based on his or her own areas of interest and study.

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Recommended Citation

Gibbs, Jordan (2018) "Charly Bliss - Guppy," *Backstage Pass*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/backstage-pass/vol1/iss1/5>

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Charly Bliss- Guppy

By Jordan Gibbs



At the 1:18 mark of the first track on Charly Bliss's breakout album *Guppy*, my ears are met with a shrill squeal that rings of no turning back. Indeed, lead singer Eva Hendricks kicks off the album leaving herself bare as bones, with a youthful angst that drives the 90s-esque group's sound into modern times. At initial listening, *Guppy* has a spunk and dark comic nature lending itself to

the better times of every careless teenager. All the while, the sound emotes an honest relatability, a sense of "take it or leave it, this is what we've got."

Guppy contains a consistency of catchy, emotionally-tinged tracks, united by an almost solemn honesty that often delves in the graphic and crude ("I laughed when your dog died/It is cruel, but it's true/Take me back, kiss my soft side/Does he love me most now that his dog is toast?"). Hendricks backed by the controlled ferocity of the band presents a vulnerability so intense that it doubles as a strength.

The music is restrained when thought-provoking, heavy and screeching when the message required it. The feel of the album is versatile, and as a result not too tunnel-visioned.

But it's hard to overstate the fact that Charly Bliss's careless sound fronted by Hendricks' squealing vocals is downright addicting. I find myself replaying tracks like "Black Hole" -- the chorus is bouncy, the lyrics juicy and rhythmically precise. Indeed, much of this band's personality is driven by Hendricks' voice, it feels youthful, dangerous, with little vision or care of what the future may bring. It's reminiscent of the angst drawn on by the music's power pop ancestry.

Certainly, it must be said that the album isn't overtly moving and is no grand testament to power pop as a means of overwhelming expression. The genre's ability to meld grittier, emotional storytelling behind the rawness of noisy guitar rock has unmistakably spawned troves of youngster fans who have held on for generations and won't let go. But the album doesn't need to be sensational, and it doesn't try to be. Sure, *Guppy* doesn't come close to the timeless depths of earlier power pop monuments like Weezer's *Blue Album*, but Charly Bliss seems to understand that. In a way, this is a self-titled debut describing the fact that the band is a guppy in a big world. It's a starting point, and there's much more to come.