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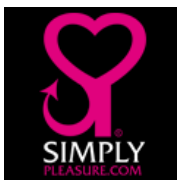
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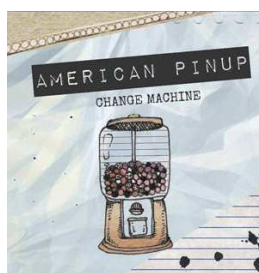
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American Pinup - 'Change Machine' (Altercation Records/Wienerworld)



CD Reviews
Written by Gaz E
Friday, 25 October 2013 04:00

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How often, when describing a pop punk outfit, does a band's press officer trawl out the most impressive list of buzzwords and soundalikes, only for the group itself, when the needle is placed on the proverbial record, to sound like every other pop punk band on the planet? It happens a lot, sadly.

But turn that frown upside down, because Westchester County's American Pinup live up to the hype and, though the band may not quite be the owner of a "unique and fresh alternative sound" it certainly has enough about it to make it stand head and shoulders above some of its more success-hungry contemporaries.

Following up 2011's debut album, 'Strange Creatures', American Pinup, fronted by the impressive Lauren West, has a rough diamond in sophomore release, 'Change Machine'.

Harbouring a wider range of musical influences than your average pop punk band, American Pinup immediately get me thinking of No Doubt - good No Doubt, not to be confused with the patchwork mess of a sound that Gwen Stefani spat out when the stylists and accountants and pressures took over. If you remember the soaring melodies, spiky pop-smear hits, all coated with a spattering of alt edge, then you'll find plenty to like here.

Opener 'Far Away' hints at the melancholia that permeates the hits of melody, glorious at times, that are spread far and wide throughout the album's ten tracks. The song writers may well have been listening to 'The Passenger' before penning 'Storm Chaser' but, other than that, American Pinup have fashioned a body of work that sounds familiar yet stands out from the pack of similarly genre-tagged bands.

The folk influence is evident on the opening of 'Siren', a love of ska paid homage to on 'Look Alive', but these more eclectic ingredients added to the broth simply make this a pop punk record that is not scared to overstep the required mark and find its own identity.

Younger listeners following an alternative path because of a role model like Paramore's Hayley Williams will find West as equally quotable and inspirational, and those who found their punk rock by way of bands like New Found Glory should find plenty to love in 'Change Machine'.

The most vacuous of all musical genres due to the riches it offers the few, pop music, when done well, lives forever. Fusing those pop sensibilities to other genres makes for striking music at times, and American Pinup have a few song bombs in their artillery.

Closing song, 'A New America', proves that this band has a little more to it than the latest procession of wannabes, its "and we still want to change the world but we're young and mostly powerless" lyric incredibly powerful, the song - an epic five and a half minutes long - a poignant slice of folk punk-inspired genius.

<https://www.facebook.com/americanpinup>

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