

music and attending their shows. The Charms want to be known; they want to be a household name - a band that people sit and talk about for years to come.

They know these things don't *really* come easy.

Easy Trouble documents The Charms' successes and their hardships, their gains and their losses. It tells the story of how they began in Boston in 1999 and how far they have come since then. Ellie Vee (the band's lead singer) and Joe Wizda (guitarist) represent the rest of the band in telling their story. Steev Riccardo (the band's manager) and Brett Milano (music journalist) provide their support as well.

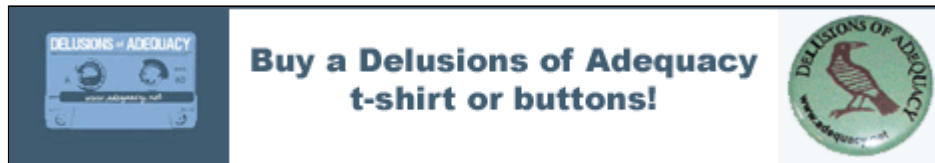
While not the most electrifying of documentaries to watch (it is slightly long-winded at 90 minutes), it provides superior insight into how independent bands actually function, and the amount of work that goes into sustaining them. The Charms have been blessed with a smart manager: Steev Riccardo knows how to promote a band. Fifteen minutes into the movie, he tells of his philosophy on making (or breaking) a band: "If you're an independent band, you've got to have a new album every year; you've got to tour every year. It's a roller coaster ride, but you have to stick with it." Independent bands don't have the monetary basis to rely on a record label doing album promotion for them: album promotion is done almost entirely by word of mouth and hard work. They won't get anywhere sitting in a garage thinking of what they *might* do - they have to actually *do* it, and be on top of their particular music scene at all times. That means always doing the right things, touring in smaller cities that bigger bands might not bother going to, and constantly putting out something new so that word of mouth never stops talking.

The Charms have excelled at all of these things: they have an exceptionally well-designed [web page](#), they've put together several marvelous music videos, they have friends in all of the right places ([Kim Fowley](#), [Little Steven](#), [Gene Simmons](#)) - in short, they are poised to make a jump into the horizon. Did I mention that they have a plan? Not the sort of plan to just play music forever and ever and hope that something comes along - but a plan to build on their particular style - a style of harder-edged pop-punk. For their last album, *Pussycat*, The Charms hired two different mixers to smooth over the final cuts. One was Toshi, who has mixed for The Strokes and They Might Be Giants. The other was Bill Motoya, whose previous clients include W.A.S.P. and Slayer. This is an odd combination, but it makes beautiful sense for The Charms - this is the type of music they are hoping to craft.

The band's members (principally Ellie Vee) have that particular charisma that is imperative for all bands, but predominantly punk ones. Ellie *knows* how to enthuse her crowd. She holds a tambourine in one hand and sings into a microphone, gyrating the entire time. Her bleach-blond hair and colorful dress style stands out. When the band plays together they radiate a positive energy that would make any crowd member excited to be a part of the show.

With continuing hard work, The Charms can soon expect to be a household name.

-Virginia Anderson
12/18/06



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