

### ***Snakes and Music – Isabelle***

Snakes and Music – Isabelle / 2006 Universal Warning / 15 Tracks / <http://www.snakesandmusic.com> / <http://www.universalwarningrecords.com> / Reviewed 17 October 2006

The title track introduces listeners to who Snakes and Music is. I know I was not familiar with the band before that, and what one can expect from the band is a brand of indie rock that is safely nestled in a guitar fuzz and dreamy vocals. The style of the title track breaks slightly into a punk framework, so that Snakes and Music approach something closer to an Against Me! or (more realistically) a Latterman or a Lawrence Arms. Snakes and Music vacillate between extremely long and short tracks no “Isabelle”. The gambit works well almost completely for the shorter tracks, but the band really pushes their luck for some of the longer (almost six-minute tracks, like “Please Explain” and “Philadelphia”).

The good thing about these longer tracks is that Snakes and Music have a game plan that allows them to forge forward bravely, and not give listeners the impression that they are out of things to sing about by the three minute mark. The slow tempo of a “Please Explain” might push the patience of some listeners, but individuals will be pleasantly surprised at the skill of Snakes and Music in crafting a full song that conforms to that extended length well. Snakes and Music work well in the mid to late nineties emo formation that demarcated acts such as those on Deep Elm Records; the very emotional arrangements of the band during songs like “Hope Texas Treats You Like A Queen” are easily the equivalent of anything that would have been on The Emo Diaries.

The tracks are not comparable with what is currently the big thing on mTV and popular radio stations, but Snakes and Music play music that is for the true audiophile rather than the thirteen year old that is just out buying their first album. All parts of Snakes and Music add to the overall sound of the album, as the aforementioned “Hope Texas Treats You Like A Queen” brings the bass to a focal point, even as the guitars, drums, and vocals are still there chugging along. This is the example of an album that can have a high number of tracks (15, here) and carry them. So many albums have too many tracks (tracks that should have been left on the cutting room floor), but Snakes and Music are talented enough and have enough tracks here to make an album that is more than full; it is something that should really be seen as a gift to the band’s fans.

Top Tracks: Take Me Down To The River, Snake Bites

Rating: 7.3/10

[JMcQ]

-James McQuiston