

## Amy Millan "Honey From the Tombs"

Arts &amp; Crafts



Amy Millan isn't exactly new to music. She fronts the chamber rock band Stars and has done some work with indie rock favorites, Broken Social Scene. Finally, after years of rocking out with bands, she's had some time to try out the whole solo thing.

If you're looking for something similar to Stars, you're looking in the wrong place. Millan's "Honey from the Tombs" is more poppy alt-country reminiscent of Jenny Lewis' solo outing with the Watson Twins with a dab of Johnny Cash and PJ Harvey.

Most of the songs from "Honey from the Tombs" were

written before Millan joined Stars and were recorded over the last three years; giving her plenty of time to fine tune her songs before stepping in the studio.

Members from Broken Social Scene play many instruments backing Millan's chirpy vocals — providing a slight indie rock edge. Her lyrics sound like drunken bar-room confessions, but avoid coming off as "dear diary" moments. The bottom line is that alt-country is taking over, so giddy up.

**Perfect for:** Being cooler than all your friends because they probably don't even know that Amy Millan has a solo album out

**Pod Picks:** "Skinny Boy," "Blue in Yr Eye," "Pour Me Up Another," "Come Home Loaded Roadie."

Andrea Bonaventura

## Snakes & Music "Isabelle"

Universal Warning Records



Former Jazz June front man Andrew Low's new project Snakes & Music has released its second offering, "Isabelle."

Apparently, you can take the songwriter out of the emo band, but you can't take the emo out of the songwriter. Though they've dropped all of the outright emo cheese, there's still that underlying feeling that leaves listeners half suspecting that breakdown where the second guitarist starts screaming in the background while the other guy sings.

"Isabelle" is pretty safe indie rock. There are touches of The Shins and Built To Spill. Low's voice is reminiscent of Neutral

Milk Hotel's Jeff Mangum, and there are folk elements that evoke bands like that as well.

Track four, "Take Me Down to the River," features a harmonica accompanied by some sparse percussion — bass drum, tambourine, some stick clicks — and is a decent little filler track, until the vocals start. A distant voice is shouting the title over and over, Southern blues-style, prompting listeners to ask, "Weren't you in the Jazz June?" If the song is a joke, it's stupid, and if it's serious, it might be worse.

Overall, Snakes & Music have produced a decent album with decent songs that end up feeling pretty boring.

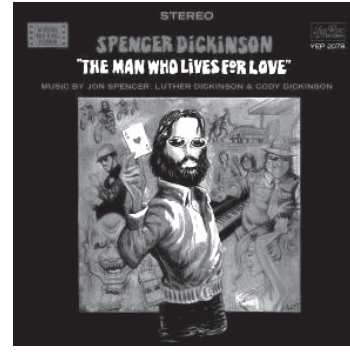
**Perfect for:** Playing at the garage sale where you finally sell all your Get Up Kids paraphernalia and think you're a grown up

**Pod picks:** The title track and "Burn the Bushes"

Zach Norton

## Spencer Dickinson "The Man Who Lives for Love"

Yep Roc



Spencer Dickinson is Jon Spencer of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, with Cody and Luther Dickinson of the North Mississippi Allstars. Originally released in Japan, this record has been re-mastered and released state-side on the Yep Roc imprint with seven previously unreleased tracks. It was recorded in 2001 with Jim Dickinson, Luther and Cody's father, and hasn't been available in the U.S. until now.

Spencer, known for his stripped down sound often consisting of two guitars and no bass, follows suit with this record. Luther and Cody

share some of these qualities in the NMA, but have more of a jam band predisposition. The record leans more toward Spencer's style, so fans of his ramshackle blues will already be familiar with the record's sound.

The problem is, it sounds bland and watered-down. They rarely stray from their straight-forward formula. Excluding the occasional keyboard squeal, it's hard to distinguish between tracks. The songs move at the same tempo, sharing the same lazy southern-bluesy groove. The record lacks the rawness and violent ferocity of Spencer's earlier work in Pussy Galore and JSBE, and keeps the Dickinson Brothers' jamming tendencies at bay.

**Perfect for:** Karaoke at a bar

**Pod picks:** "Away Baby" and "Primitive"

Johnny Garcia

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