

Music Review: Keane - Hopes and Fears

1. Somewhere Only We Know
2. Bend and Break
3. We Might As Well Be Strangers
4. Everybody's Changing
5. Your Eyes Open
6. She Has No Time
7. Can't Stop Now
8. Sunshine
9. This is the Last Time
10. On A Day Like Today
11. Untitled I

12. Bedshaped Keane might just be the only band in Britain to have the dubious privilege of being able to say they're named after a dinner lady. Then again, they might also be the only band in Britain to want that privilege.

The Battle-born three piece, once known as Cherry Keane (after the aforementioned elderly refectory worker, described by Chaplin as "a kind old lady who helped make tea at school"), have drawn innumerable comparisons to Coldplay thanks to their piano-led ballads, but to liken them to their University College classmates is to do them a disservice. While Coldplay are whiney and boring, Keane shine on this debut, mainly due to baby-faced lead singer Tom Chaplin's voice. Rather bizarrely he sounds, at times, not dissimilar to Ewan McGregor in Moulin Rouge, vocals soaring above the piano and drum accompaniment. 'This is the Last Time' really showcases his vocal talent, the result almost choral; while 'She Has No Time' presents a more mournful Chaplin without the maudlin qualities existent even in Chris Martin's best efforts. Keane shun guitars for a simple piano and drum set-up, and while Muse have proved the old joanna can be innovatory and different, on 'Hopes and Fears' the most exciting thing you'll hear is a bit of synth. That's not to say the overall result doesn't sound good, Keane's ivory tinkler, Tim

Rice-Oxley, is clearly a highly qualified pianist, but while 'Hopes' twelve tracks don't quite outstay their welcome, by the group's second album fans may well be hoping for something a bit different. This is a consistent debut with only a couple of tracks which grate (for example the over long bore-fest that is 'Untitled 1'), however none quite reach the euphoric heights of second single and album opener 'Somewhere Only We Know'. 'Bedshaped' comes damn close however, as does the beautiful 'Your Eyes Open'. Perhaps the best way to describe Chaplin, Rice-Oxley and Hughes' (Richard, drums) music is inoffensive - songs that your gran might describe as 'a nice little tune'. While this might spell bland to a lot of people, your gran would be right, 'Hopes and Fears' is full of nice little tunes that will sound as good to a University student as they will to the same student's dad. Essentially this is a slick sounding, if slightly samey, debut with a lot to offer. Let's just hope Keane can pull something a bit different out of the bag for their second album as they're surely destined for bigger and better things having already notched up two top ten hits and a number one album ahead of The Streets. Cherry Keane, if only you could see your namesakes now.

About the Author

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