

Mixmasters Round 15

Mixmaster Advisory: Play Loud - compiled by Mixmaster Steven Reule

Round 15. Who would have thought? And I still love this Mixmaster project. Oh, it was easy in the first few rounds. I just picked some of my favorite artists and songs and made a mix tape. But the idea is to find new music and share it, so we started trying to use artists that haven't been used before in Mixmasters. And that got harder and harder with each round. So many artists have been used already. But this time another miracle happened and I was able to make yet another killer mix with no artists that have been used before. Woo-hoo! So here you have it. Twelve artists new to Mixmasters. For some of them, I used two, three, or even four songs. Maybe I really liked them, or maybe I wanted to show some variety within the group. Other artists only got one song. Maybe it is their best song. Or maybe not.

Either way, I wanted this mix to be just a bit more rock-oriented. We get a lot of pop, power-pop, pop-rock, etc in this project and that's great. But I wanted something this time that you might play a little louder and rock a bit more to. Don't worry! It's still catchy and infectious. No death metal, no 80s hair bands, no pompous wankers (well, maybe), no punk, and no grunge. Just good, catchy rock with a modern sensibility. And maybe a couple softer songs but not too many. So it's called "Mixmaster Advisory – Play Loud" and maybe you will want to do just that. If not, don't worry, it will still be good at any volume. Give it at least a few spins, some of these songs didn't catch me the first time. But it's all good. Really!

The songs

Derby: Jet Set

Album: This Is The New You

"Maybe it's all right to turn you on, turn you on to something new"

A nice soft start, a mellow introduction. This band from the northwest has an indie-rock feel with a hint of Pink Floyd in some of their songs.

Panic! At The Disco: The Only Difference Between Martyrdom And Suicide Is Press Coverage

Album: A Fever You Can't Sweat Out

"Swear to shake it up if you swear to listen"

Let's pick up the pace a bit. This one has hooks and rocks out too. I saw these guys live and I think they are better on the CD. I could listen to this CD over and over for it's lyrical and musical cleverness and catchiness. More songs by them later in the mix.

Arctic Monkeys: Teddy Picker

Album: Favourite Worst Nightmare

"Who'd want to be men of the people when there's people like you?"

Their first album got good reviews and so did this one, their second. Tight songs and playing, interesting lyrics, and riffs and beats that grab you. Snappy brit-rock.

Metric: Patriarch On A Vespa

Album: Live It Out

“Trying to fix it when instead we should break it. We’ve got to break it before it breaks us.”

A real find, in my opinion. I saw this band and was really taken by the intensity of the lead singer and the slightly bent modern rock songs. “Fear of comparison shopping”. How can you not love that? These are ultra-cool lyrics. Play it loud, mixmasters!

Regina Spektor: On The Radio

Album: Begin To Hope

“We heard November Rain, that song is pretty long, but it’s a good refrain. You listen to it twice cause the DJ is asleep.”

We take it down a notch here. Regina’s alt-folk may be an acquired taste for some but her most recent album is amazingly interesting. I love her slightly-Russian-sounding vocals and the amazing lyrics. I love this song, really love it.

Johnette Napolitano: Poem For The Native

Album: Scarred

“Watch and wait as the desert blooms and dies”

Not exactly a repeat artist, but her band Concrete Blonde has graced Mixmasters before. A fine band. Here she is solo and this album is really good. Any CB fans should love it. This track has a slight Native-American feel (ala Robbie Robertson) but her then vocals start wailing and you’re sucked into a wonderful oblivion. I hope you still have the volume up.

Rhett Miller: My Valentine

Album: The Believer

“Love in the asylum is a beautiful thing”

I have two albums by him and there’s a handful of songs that are pretty good and some others that are just ok IMHO. This one is a good one from his second album. I like the verses, I like the chorus, you should too!

Art Brut: Nag Nag Nag Nag

Album: It’s A Bit Complicated

“A record collection reduced to a mix tape, headphones on I made my escape”

I used a couple songs by them but not the one about actually MAKING a mix tape. Man, I think I shoulda used that one too. Well, anyway, another heavily British sounding band that rocks out but with interesting lyrics. No moon june spoon crap on THIS mix. I like the mildly snotty delivery, kind of talk-singing.

She Wants Revenge: I Don’t Wanna Fall In Love

Album: She Wants Revenge

"I know that I'll have regrets but that's the price of one more lesson learned"
Are they Joy Division wannabees? Maybe. But I like this song. Electronic and droning but in the best way. I love the electro call-and-answer chorus.

Panic! At The Disco: I Write Sins Not Tragedies

Album: A Fever You Can't Sweat Out

"Haven't you people ever heard of closing the god-damn door?"

This was a minor radio hit here and maybe elsewhere. Great start with the plucked violins and then it totally takes off. A unique perspective and lyrics, doesn't sound like anyone else and yet still has hooks all over the place.

Derby: Qualities

Album: This Is The New You

"I'm a bit of everything, of everyone"

A slower rocker, hear those Pink Floyd influences on this one, on the chorus? Well, I do. Stereo afterglow indeed. This is a little break from the more rock stuff so relax for a couple minutes and then we'll rock again.

Metric: Live It Out

Album: Live it Out

"Vertebrae by vertebrae you're way out of a coma."

It starts off soft enough but then the guitar riff and the beat kick in. I love the way the vocals kind of swarm over the beat and that it has hooks but doesn't sound like a typical rock song. This CD was one of my favorite discoveries of 2007. And still great in 08.

Arctic Monkeys: D Is For Dangerous

Album: Favourite Worst Nightmare

"Everyone knows you're his favourite worst nightmare"

Another brit-rocker, snarly attitude with pop-rock catchiness. I just picked up their other CD, hope it's as good as this one.

Mon Frere: Y.M.M.W.D.S.B.

Album: Blood Sweat And Swords

"You Make Me Wanna Destroy Something Beautiful"

Cute keyboard intro then it's all about an angry vocal and, well, the title says it all. This trio has some other good songs too but this one fit one the mix the best.

Metric: Too Little Too Late

Album: Live It Out

"You can take a live wire into the bath with you, for a feeling you can't find."

Another Metric song, this one a ballad more or less. A pointy guitar intro leads a deceptively mellow verse. The lyrics let you know that it's not a sappy love song. And there's an intensity that lies not very far underneath. Still playing it loud?

Panic! At The Disco: Camisado

Album: A Fever You Can't Sweat Out

"The IV at your hospital bed, this was no accident, this was a therapeutic chain of events"

One more from this young band. As they say "Just sit back and relax". It's a good modern rocker with some twists here and there. They have a sound that is different but still accessible. And catchy, you know it is.

Arctic Monkeys: Do Me A Favour

Album: Favourite Worst Nightmare

"There was tears on the steering wheel dripping on the seat"

And another brit-rocker from the Monkeys. You gotta love that beat. Turn it up and move. This stuff should be all over the radio but here in the US we don't play much good stuff, just the crap. I can see why they are popular in the UK, this disc rocks and doesn't stop. Love the bass and beat in this one but the vocal and lyrics are good too. A totally great love-gone-bad song.

Regina Spektor: Fidelity

Album: Begin To Hope

"I hear in my mind, all of this music, and it breaks my heart"

Well, maybe they do play some good songs on the radio here. I heard this one a few times. This is possibly the best single of 2007. Well, in the top ten at least. A mix of a great hook, cool lyrics, unique vocals, and just general greatness.

Shiny Toy Guns: Le Disko

Album: We Are Pilots

"We're gonna ride the racecars, we're gonna dance on fire"

Kevin loves this band. He says every song on the CD is great. I like the CD but this is the standout track for me. They really need to use the female vocalist more in the other songs. The first time I heard this I stayed in the car long after just to try to hear who it was. Then I bought the 12" single with the remixes. The song is so unique, powerful, and stunningly good. I really love her vocal and the icy way she delivers her lines.

Art Brut: Pump Up The Volume

Album: It's A Bit Complicated

"Is it so wrong, to break from your kiss to turn up a pop song?"

The guitar riff that starts this song will NOT be denied. Just great music and cool lyrics. Yeah, sex is fine but I just gotta hear that pop song!!

Johanne Napolitano: Everything For Everyone

Album: Scarred

"I lived to serve until I found my nerve but now I need what I deserve"

A moody number from Johanne that builds and crawls into your brain in a good good way. I love her singing, she has one of the best voices in rock. And that chorus just won't let up. And I don't want it to! Rock on.

Metric: Monster Hospital

Album: Live It Out

"I fought the war but the war won. The war won't...stop in the name of god."
Another twisted but catchy melody that kicks in and doesn't let go. Remember, play it loud! She has such a great rock voice and I just love the songwriting and the way they rock!

Nouvelle Vague: Sweet And Tender Houligan (Live)

Album: Bande A Part (Special Limited Edition)

"He'll never ever do it again. No, not until the next time"

A cover version of the Morrissey song, which you should already know. I know Brett does! This band takes 70s and 80s punk and new wave classics and does them mellow and sort of bossanova style. A fun band to see, they cover New Order, Blondie, Dead Kennedys, XTC, Depeche Mode, Billy Idol, Bauhaus, U2, Killing Joke, Buzzcocks, The Cure and a ton of other classic artists. This is a bonus track on the "limited" version of the CD. And as Morrissey so eloquently wrote, "etcetera etcetera etcetera..."

And so it ends. Long live Mixmasters!!

If you want to live life on the edge, you can view these liner notes at my web site. Go to <http://www.stevenology.com> and click on mixmasters at the bottom of the page. Oh, the ecstasy!

Now peace out, pilgrims!

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