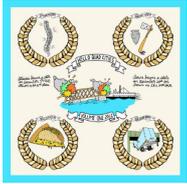


Setting the Scene: “Hello Quad Cities – Volume 1”

Written by Jeff Ignatius

Wednesday, 29 August 2012 08:34



The first thing to stress about *Hello Quad Cities – Volume 1* is that as compilations go, it's strong from front to back and varied without feeling scattershot. The challenging format tends to result in well-intentioned hodgepodes of second-rate leftovers, but the tracks here – from 12 area bands – are all exclusive, and most were written specifically for the compilation. More importantly, while you might not find all of them to your liking, there isn't a weak link.

The second thing to emphasize is that if you're curious about the project, you shouldn't dawdle. The release is available only on vinyl, and a mere 350 copies were pressed. (Each album includes a download code, but there will be no separate digital or CD release.) And they'll only be sold at a pair of record-release shows, by the featured bands, and at Ragged Records.

Jason Parris, who put the compilation together and is the talent-buyer at RIBCO, said he got the idea for *Hello Quad Cities* a few years ago when he came across some old Quad Cities and Iowa City compilations. “The scene around here was lacking something like that,” he said. “It just didn't seem *together*. And I thought something like a compilation could help maybe bring the music scene a little closer.”

So he began soliciting submissions from bands – those he thought “would fit what I considered a ‘record’ format, who would embrace the idea of being put on vinyl – ... the group of individuals that I would imagine would be shopping for records.” (Parris said he was assisted on the project by Ragged Records' Bob Herington, and by Jeff Konrad – who mastered and sequenced it.)

Parris said he chose a small-run vinyl release to make it special. “You get the big artwork; the colored vinyl looks amazing – and it's all random, so every one's a different color. I wanted a unique gift to give back to the Quad Cities.”

The choice proved beneficial. In the interest of featuring as many acts as possible, he limited song lengths to three and a half minutes – allowing six songs per side. That time constraint pushed bands to write new tracks for *Hello Quad Cities*, he said.

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Parris said he also employed a little peer pressure: “You’re going to be on a comp with all your other friends’ bands. You’re going to be on a comp with your scene. So putting out your garbage ... is only going to make you sound ... worse. ... This is supposed to be something unique. ... The idea is: Let’s write songs for this comp. Have fun with it. Let’s show people that the Quad Cities does have a scene. ... It’s happening again.”

The cover artwork was done by Daytrotter.com’s Johnnie Cluney and features taco pizza and chiropractic, the Effie Afton and the truck-eating bridge – evidence that our bridges are winning their war with vehicles.

As for the music, *Hello Quad Cities* features a trio of bands who’ve released material on Future Appletree: Seth Knappen, Chrash, and the Multiple Cat. The local label also released albums by Parris’ Driver of the Year, but the new compilation isn’t an exercise in nepotism, with plenty of newer bands alongside those veterans.

Healing Power kicks things off with the throbbing rock and urgent single-mindedness of “I Want You,” and that’s followed by three tracks of charming electro-pop – a coherent section unified by corny keyboards. But the first side jumps that rut with the jangly, hopping guitar pop of Chrash’s “Insecurity Faction,” and it closes with the aching Americana beauty “Gold Souvenirs” by American Dust.

The second side is harder, closing with the spacious, clean metal of Lion in Rome’s “Weight” – with its sharp-edged but elastic guitar leads – and highlighted by Satellite Heart’s casually catchy rocker “Bob De Niro,” locked in a rhythmic groove from the drums to the vocals. The heartfelt questioning in the singing and harmonica of Tambourine’s “How Far?” is balanced by its jaunty piano foundation.

While I haven’t specifically mentioned some tracks, every song on *Hello Quad Cities – Volume 1* stands pretty tall in its own style, and those that don’t connect with me reflect personal taste more than a song’s shortcomings.

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Parris said that he’s already working on a 2013 edition of the compilation. “Ideally ... every April we’ll have a new one for that Record Store Day,” he said. “This one just got delayed so much that it came out in September.”

He added that although he envisions *Hello Quad Cities* as an ongoing long-term project, he hopes that the further emergence of a local scene will give it a life of its own: “After two or three of these comps, I want to pass it on to somebody else.”

The release of Hello Quad Cities – Volume 1 will be marked by two listening parties/concerts: Friday, September 7, at Rozz-Tox (2108 Third Avenue, Rock Island;

RozzTox.com

), and Saturday, September 8, at RIBCO (1815 Second Avenue, Rock Island;

RIBCO.com

). Friday’s 8 p.m. show will feature Chrash, Break Up Art, Centaur Noir, American Dust, and Konrad, and admission is \$3. Saturday’s 8 p.m. show will feature Healing Power, New Beautiful, Seth Knappen, Tambourine, and The Multiple Cat, and admission is \$5.

The album will be available at both events, and at Ragged Records (418 East Second Street, Davenport) starting on Tuesday, September 11. The price is \$12.

For more information on Hello Quad Cities – Volume 1, visit HelloQuadCities.com.