

## LIARS

Liars have never been a band comfortable with staying in one place for very long. Geographically, personally and most of all musically, each successive album that they release comes with a new agenda, a new heritage, a new set of reference points and a new way of thinking about music.

So, after the multimedia multi-tasking of 2006's 'Drum's Not Dead' – each track of which came accompanied with three exclusive short films - Liars have returned with their most stripped-back and direct album yet. Simply titled 'Liars', their 4th full-length (recorded in Berlin and LA and mixed in London by Erasure and Depeche Mode producer Gareth Jones) abandons the thirty minute sound collages called things like 'This Dust That Makes The Mud' of old in favour of a set of the band's most conventional and powerful songs yet – although as a band with a reputation forged on thirty minute sound collages called things like 'This Dust That Makes The Mud', Liars' recent career swerve is a delightfully surprising as ever.

6" 6' Australian singer Angus Andrew explains the methodology behind this new approach: "It was a bit of a reaction to what we'd gone through in the creative process – I think that in the past we always felt like we needed to give our albums a concept. But this time we felt like we'd earned the right not to explain everything all the time or give the songs an overarching theme."

"I think that we also wanted to make sure that we weren't diverting the listener's interest away from the music with hi-falutin' titles," continues Andrew. "People end up finding more to talk and think about in those words than they do in the actual music itself. This time we wanted to avoid that and not have any external influences on people's perception in terms of titles or weird artwork. Everything is very straightforward this time. The speed of production was doubled compared to our previous albums, so in a way it offered us less time to talk about things."

Angus, Aaron Hemphill and Julian Gross - who has played drums with the band since the departure of original rhythm section Pat Nature and Ron Albertson after the band's first album, 2001's 'They Threw Us All In A Trench And Put A Monument On Top' - decided not to overanalyse the process of making their music.

"We aimed to make songs that weren't going to require a concept. We decided to work really quickly and not talk about what we were doing too much. Aaron and I wanted to write songs that spoke for themselves in a more visceral way – like when you're a teenager and things really mean a lot for you in a song. We wanted to write songs that reminded us a little of what it was like to be a teenager – so pretty much the only preparation we did was going back and listening to the bands we liked when we were kids, stuff like OMD, The Cure and Siouxsie And The Banshees."

Although Andrew and former microbiologist Aaron Hemphill met in LA (where Andrew studied photography at art school), after a stay in New York the band relocated to Berlin as a base for European touring. Hemphill and Gross returned to LA soon after Drum's Not Dead but Andrew stayed on in the German capital, where the bulk of 'Liars' was recorded at Planet Roc (sic) studios, a former East German radio studio built in the 1950s by Bauhaus architect Franz Ehrlich. After working on their songs separately in Germany and the US, Liars convened at Planet Roc for a fortnight in spanning New Year's Eve 2006/2007 to stitch together their ideas.

"Planet Roc was built as a broadcast facility for radio and is in the old East Berlin so it has this strange communist vibe about it – but it feels liberating to use it for the kind of means we're using it for. But the best thing about it is that it has loads of different sized rooms and corners to record in – we ended up recording a drum pattern in a stairwell."

"Sometimes we had two rooms – I'd be working on one room and Aaron would be next door in the next room working on his stuff. It can be quite frightening, but Aaron and I have worked together for ten years and we trust each other, even though sometimes we work in total opposition to each other. Like for this record our interests were different sonically: we were both writing songs about freedom and teenage melodrama, but I was interested in the bass and Aaron was more into the high-end trebly stuff."

The band weren't balancing their interests alone, however: a friend of Andrew's from Australia, Jeremy Glover, played bass and helped record the album. "Jeremy understood where we were coming from and helped to craft the songs in the studio to help us find that visceral edge we were searching for. We wanted to make a record that would have the same impact on people as hearing, like, the Ramones for the first time did on us."

Their quest to connect on a more visceral level has succeeded. Unlike, say, 2004's 'They Were Wrong, So We Drowned', which boasted a fractured narrative based on accounts of the Salem Witch Trials, 'Liars' is a set of songs only connected by the fact that no other band around could make music like this. From the demonic football chant of 'Clear Island', to 'Freak Out's industrial Beach Boys loveliness, the metal-flavoured birth rite of 'Cycle Time' or 'Houseclouds's no-fi electro shuffle, this is an album that manages to balance the old, experimentally-minded Liars with an excitingly insidious new pop edge.

"Every record you learn a lot about what you can do" says Angus, who moved back to LA after completing the album. "With this one we've gone another step towards making music. When we started the band was more like a means of expression. Now it feels like we're gaining control of a medium a bit more. I feel I know at least in some sense about how to connect with people now. Before it was a bit more like an experiment, a stab in the dark."

The experiment has been an unqualified success. By getting back to basics with 'Liars' the band are going back to the future.