

4AD have long been a favourite label here at FATEA. One of the prime reasons is the sheer strength of the band's on the label. Regardless of style you can always guarantee good songs, profound lyrics and often a sense of other worldliness.

Recently 4AD released an album from newcomers, Liquorice. The 10 track album, "Listening Cap" maintains all the classic traditions, whilst tending towards a more pop sound than a lot of bands on the label.

Liquorice are a trio made up of Dan Littleton, Trey Many and Jenny Toomey. The sound has been described as being like the Sundays, only happier. Certainly there are similarities vocally. The lighter aspect of the music is quite refreshing.

Though light and poppy in terms of sound style that's not at the expense of depth. These are not throw away songs, most of the album, bears constant and repeated listening.

Lyrical the songs are just as likely to throw you off at a tangent as they are to lead you up a blind alley. Often they make you think. Liquorice have a strange perspective on the world.

When they were over here recently it seemed like to good an opportunity to miss. I picked up the phone and gave Jenny a call.

#J=Jenny Toomey #N=Neil King

#N How did the band end up being called Liquorice ?

#J That was actually the last thing. Most people get a band going before giving it a name. It was my Mom that named it Liquorice. We all went to her house for a dinner and we were talking about a name and she said, "Why don't you call it Liquorice ?" I sort of liked the idea that liquorice is like a kind of grown up sweet. It's the candy the kids discard. Almost every culture has a liqueur that has a liquorice based taste, ouzo, pernod, sambouka. There's nothing deep behind it.

#N What are the plans for Liquorice ?

#J Well we've got this album coming out. We're going to be touring and we've just started recording an album of covers. After that we'll start recording another album of our songs, once we've written them.

#N How old is "Listening Cap" as an album ?

#J It was recorded last September. It's difficult to get the band together as we live in three different cities. I live near Washington DC, Dan lives in New York and Trey lives in Detroit. Dan and I are old friends have been trying to get together in a band for a while. I had the chance to do this record so I invited him along. We went to Detroit to record the record and Trey was there. We've played a couple of dates. We're really just getting to know him.

#N Was the album originally going to be a solo project ?

#J It was originally going to be on a different label they were going to start up. Not Guernica but a different label for one off releases. I didn't really have an idea of what sort of band I would record a solo record with. Then I decided to do it with Dan.

#N One thing I like about the album is the matter of factness of it. That and the play on words like "Jill Of All Trades" without trying to get too clever about it. Is that something that comes from you, as I believe you wrote most of the lyrics.

#J That's right, except for the song Dan sings and the two covers on the record. Lyrics are really important. There are a lot of songs on the radio that aren't trying to say anything. I'm only dealing with a broad message, rather than answer anything, but I think it's real important that a song try and says something. It's the difference between a band like Nirvana and a band like Bush. They are very similar, except with Nirvana there was a real story being told. Bush seem like they're singing to Bush all the time.

#N Having said that a song should say something, why then go for an album of covers next ?

#J Well, it's not just my own lyrics that are important. Dan and I when we weren't in a band together would occasionally meet up and play a few covers. We're very influenced by music. One reason is because you respect and artist and a song, or you might agree with what a song is saying, or because you simply like the sound of it. We're not going to be doing standard covers like "Louie Louie" or "Sweet Jane".

#N How happy are you with the paraphernalia.

#J I don't do anything that I don't want to do, ever. I don't compromise on issues of importance. I was involved in the creative processes. I had to act in the video, which was a bit freaky because I don't really act. I don't have much of a problem with that. If a photographer wants me to do something stupid, I won't do it. If you're part of the process then it's not too bad.

#N Cheers.