



Boys Like Girls

Label(s): [Columbia](#) [1]

Genre: [Pop](#) [2],

[Rock](#) [3]

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"I like to listen to music that makes me feel a certain way--either it reminds me of something important that happened or a certain time in my life," says Boys Like Girls frontman Martin Johnson. "If kids are feeling that way about our songs, I couldn't ask for anything more."

The Boston-area band -- which also includes John Keefe (drums), Bryan Donahue (bass) and Paul DiGiovanni (lead guitar) -- is paying that feeling forward by focusing on making lasting connections with its fans. It's clear from the first note of their self-titled debut disc, which kicks off with the youthful enthusiasm of "The Great Escape" and closes with the "what's next?" sentiment of ballad "Holiday." In between is emotionally-charged rock that isn't afraid to wear its heart on its sleeve, digs a good pop hook and certainly speaks volumes to anyone who has loved--and maybe got their heart bruised in the process.

However, it's the pure love of the fans that has gotten Boys Like Girls this far already. After years of playing in various bands throughout their high school days, John, Bryan and Martin solidified the BLG line-up with Paul (who, after joining the band, was discovered to be John's cousin). Then, like most smart bands, the guys posted some demos online.

An early demo version of "The Great Escape" and acoustic spin on "Thunder" were the sparks that ignited a firestorm of attention on the band's MySpace and purevolume.com pages. By the end of



2005, the guys were topping the purevolume.com New Artists chart (and gathering thousands of MySpace friends). Among those listening online were booking agent Matt Galle (Taking Back Sunday, My Chemical Romance) and producer Matt Squire (Panic! At The Disco) who felt that special something in Boys Like Girls' demos. They contacted the band about working together. Plans, and friendships, were made. The guys penned more music for their eventual debut disc and were invited to play on the national Pure Volume tour with A Thorn for Every Heart and Hit the Lights. It was an honor for the young band -- and the guys' first taste of their swelling fanbase.

"It was pretty amazing," recalls Johnson. "We didn't really know what to expect from just posting a couple of demos. But when we were able see the people on the other side of the computer in person, we saw that they were singing the words to our songs. It was incredible."

The band took that energy and headed into the studio with Matt Squire, and the Boys Like Girls sound started to gel.

"Matt puts a lot of heart into the music he works on, and he did with ours," says Johnson. "He is really amazing at bringing stuff to another level sonically, tweaking things in just the right spots to make it perfect."

Energetic, emotional and real, the album progresses through the lust-for-life urgency of "Five Minutes to Midnight," energetic love anthem "Hero/Heroine" to more intense pop ballads of "Learning to Fall" and "Broken Man."

To an active listener the album plays out with the ups and downs of a new relationship, charting the story of youth, love, adventure -- and the loss and heartbreak that is sometimes a byproduct of putting yourself on the line.

"You can hear a little story within the track listing," says Johnson. "It starts off with this song that's about moving on and getting out of town, 'The Great Escape,' and goes through to 'Holiday' which is about asking who I am and starting over. It's basically a couple of years in my life."

After finishing the album, the band was hungry to get back to the fans, touring with Cute Is What We Aim For and then with Butch Walker. This time the experience had changed again--for both the band and audience.

"Now we are able to play the songs that we perfected in the studio. It really changed the experience for us. We knew these songs were the final, real deal so we are able to give them that extra flavor live. It's amazing," says Johnson who is always quick to bring it back to the faces in the crowd. "There's so much emotional connection to the music, from us and the fans that it doesn't get any better than playing live. It's like we're giving them a small part of us in a three minute, little compressed package."

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