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# WESTWORD

## WEB EXCLUSIVES

### CD Review

# *Juno* soundtrack provides eclectic mix of tunes

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*Juno* is a light-hearted film that centers on the controversial issue of teen pregnancy. If they know about the film at all, most people would focus on the major issue addressed in the film but not on its soundtrack. What they fail to realize, however, is that the *Juno* soundtrack has its own distinctive sound that helps to give the film personality.

With artists from The Velvet Underground to The Kinks to Buddy Holly, the *Juno* soundtrack has music that is appropriate for all ages. Its unique acoustic sound is reminiscent of the music that appears in the film *Napoleon Dynamite*, but with a less comedic feel. While the songs on the soundtrack itself are not very serious, the listener is able to tell that there is an intended method in its compilation.

The songs included on the soundtrack would not likely be paired together on a CD. However, it has a good flow because of the mellow sound. There is an informal style that gives the listener the laid-back feel of hanging out on a weekend afternoon. This informal feel makes listeners believe that they are a part of the laid-back atmosphere. Even the instrumental breaks are easy to listen to because they are short and catchy. The listener is comforted by the offering of breaks in-between strings of voices and mostly fast-paced melodies.

The obvious stand-out songs on the soundtrack are spread throughout the album. They include the first track, "All I Want Is You," by Barry Louis Polisar, "A Well Respected Man" by The Kinks, "All the Young Dudes" by Mott The Hoople, "Sea of Love" by Cat Power, and "Anyone Else But You" by The Moldy Peaches. A version of "Anyone Else But You" that is performed by Michael Cera and Ellen Page is also included as the last track on the CD. These songs stand out because they keep the mood of the album while they make points to the listener and have additives that make them special. These songs also help to contribute to the soft, mellow feel by having simple melodies with feel-good tunes. They use elements such as catchy, refreshing melodies and mostly upbeat verses that raise the morale of listeners and make them feel as if they are familiar with these songs.

If the soundtrack has one flaw, it is that most of the songs are very similar sounding because of their equivalent styles. Throughout the soundtrack, nearly all of the songs are made up of acoustic guitar and singing. The exception is the track "Superstar" by Sonic Youth. This cover of the Leon Russell/Bonnie Bramlett-penned tune made popular by The Carpenters sets a 1960s vibe that takes the listener out of the relaxing element displayed in the remainder of the album. The monotony of the album is also broken up by the addition of a harmonica, whistling, humming and other sounds that give each song their own identity and familiarity.

Tracks on the album, including "Vampire" by Antsy Pants, are odd selections for the soundtrack because they do not seem to fit with the other songs on the album and can be unsettling because they are unexpected. Although "Vampire" is reminiscent of the rest of the soundtrack, the lyrics are mostly a repetition of the words "I am a vampire." Another song that does not seem to match the rest of the CD is "I'm Sticking with You" by The Velvet Underground. The start of this track sounds like music that would be heard at a circus and then contorts into a slow-paced '50s pop song. Strange tracks like this blindsides the listener with the surprise of lyrics or sounds that are completely different from the rest of the soundtrack.

The *Juno* soundtrack can be very personal and laid-back. Like life, it has surprise elements that appear when listeners least expect them. The CD almost sounds homemade, which is refreshing because it is different from other more serious soundtracks. The intensity level is very low and makes the listener feel at home. Overall, the *Juno* soundtrack represents a view of a typical life, full of relaxing, comforting moments that have soft melodies to soothe the listener but are also unexpectedly intertwined with unsettling surprises.

