

Circ – 15k



Acoustic Ladyland

Last Chance Disco

Babel | ★★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Pete Wareham (ts, v), Tom Cawley (kys), Tom Herbert (b) and Seb Rochford (d). Rec. 2004

While last year's *Camouflage* documented their early re-imaginings of Jimi Hendrix, *Last Chance Disco* shows a working band that has blossomed into an angry teenager. On this, their second album, Acoustic Ladyland ditch Hendrix to storm through 11 beautifully outrageous, X-rated jazz-rock creations. How refreshing their lack of respect for convention and tradition is and how unusual it is to hear a jazz group, especially a British one, that sounds so utterly original.

While most of its members are in their late twenties or early thirties, Acoustic Ladyland have the energy of hormonal high school rockers on this album. A tenor sax jazz quartet in appearance only, equally, if not more, a product of The Ramones, The Sex Pistols, The Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs and Franz Ferdinand than any jazz tradition.

Musically, *Last Chance Disco* veers from sweet to sour: the hardcore, new-wave jamming of 'High Heel Blues' and the whirlwind, ska-drenched 'Deck Chair', that morphs into free form grindcore rock by the end, versus the tender 'Nico', a tribute to The Velvet Underground. Wareham screeches as if he's Albert Ayler reborn, mimicking vocal lines and guitar riffs rather than sax solos. Underneath it all is the relentless, quick-witted rock drumming of Sebastian Rochford (outrageous on 'Of You'); the rip-roaring keys of Tom Cawley and Tom Herbert's masterful electric basslines.

If rock critics fail to pick up on *Last Chance Disco*, then they're missing out. Sonically adventurous and damn loud, this is music to give Wynton a heart attack. But the album isn't aimed at jazz audiences anyway. As Wareham defiantly sings on the album's only vocal number ('Perfect Bitch'): "now I'm leaving you/thank you all the way/I'll tear up all the rules/not going to play." He could be saying "adios" to the jazz scene – but ironically, he has also created one of its most irresistible albums in years. **Tom Barlow**