



IMAGE COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL RECORDS
Ryan Cabrera got a boost towards fame by appearing in "The Ashlee Simpson Show."

ALTERNATIVE PICKS



CARRIE PIERCE
 REVIEWER

Ryan Cabrera Take It All Away Universal Records

A few years ago, Dallas native Ryan Cabrera was knocking on sorority house doors in College Station, offering to play songs for whoever would listen. Now, he is touring from coast to coast as his hit single "On the Way Down" climbs the charts. How exactly does a 21-year-old go from a drop-in sorority house performer to an overnight sensation? By dating the right girl, touring with her sister and then releasing an album with 12 catchy songs.

In 2001, John Rzeznik from the Goo Goo Dolls coproduced Cabrera's independent release "Elm Street." After notable local success, Cabrera decided to quit school (he was enrolled at the Dallas branch of t.u., so good move on his part) and became a full-time solo artist. He then got together with Joe Simpson, manager and father of pop-star Jessica and signed a record deal with Atlantic. Cabrera's big break may have been his appearances on "The Ashlee Simpson Show" during their brief romance. He then started touring with Jessica.

Cabrera's debut album is full of the heart and raw emotion expected of a college-age man. Cabrera wrote and played guitar on all of his songs, with Rzeznik supplying back-up guitar and vocals on three tracks. Although he sounds like a mix of John Mayer, Howie Day and Graham Colton, Cabrera said his biggest influence was listening to Dave Matthews.

The album begins with "Let's Take Our Time," a song any college man can relate to and any college woman would think is a ploy to get her in

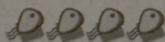
bed. Singing, "When you whisper in my ear/ All the things you wanna do/ This sensation starts to grow," Cabrera shows there is more to him than his ex-girlfriend and a goofy hairdo. Cabrera can write, sing and play well.

The album continues with Cabrera's first single, "On the Way Down." Currently on the Billboard charts, this radio hit never gets old. If it does, however, skip to track 12, where the live version blows away the radio release. With its catchy lyrics and lively background beat, this song defines the album and guarantees that Cabrera will not be a one-hit wonder.

Cabrera continues his lover-boy lyrics with songs such as the mournful "She's," the tearful "40 Kinds of Sadness" and the emotionally packed "Take it All Away." It seems as if this guy has survived a lot of heartbreak for a 21-year-old. Cabrera croons sadly, leaving one to wonder if he wrote these songs before or after dating Ashlee.

The most enjoyable song on the album could easily be the sexy "Shame on Me." With its slightly scandalous message, Cabrera sings "Shame on me wanting you/ The way I fantasize about/ What I'd give, what I'd do/ I just want to work you out." Mixing these racy lyrics with Carlos Santana-styled guitar riffs, this track shows Cabrera's musical maturity.

This is definitely a fun, catchy album that anyone should give a chance. Although men may be turned away by the image he portrayed on MTV and the fact that he thanks "Nick and Jess" in the liner notes, "Take it All Away" is a relatable album by an artist with a lot of potential.



TICKET FOR ONE



ROBERT SAUCEDO
 REVIEWER

If there was ever a movie that could be called an "art house" flick, it is "Coffee and Cigarettes." The latest film from acclaimed director Jim Jarmusch, the film features a series of short films strung together by a unifying theme of, well, coffee and cigarettes. A collection of conversations ranging from the absurd to the insightful, the film's vignettes feature some of Hollywood's greatest contemporary actors and a musician or two discussing the trivial things in life that are often the most entertaining.

Difficult to classify, the film's shorts are a broad assortment of topics and styles. Even though not all the shorts work to their fullest potential, even the dullest of the shorts is far more entertaining than half the sitcoms ruling the airwaves today.

The first segment was filmed more than 17 years ago and features Roberto Benigni and Steven Wright meeting in a small café to discuss coffee addiction and dentist appointments. Quickly setting the stage for the following 90 minutes, the short seems to be an awkward conversation between two people who don't seem to know each other, yet share an extreme fondness of coffee and cigarettes.

For the next 17 years, Jarmusch would film 10 more short films, shelving them away until one day he would have a finished collage in his hands.

"Coffee & Cigarettes" on DVD Starring Bill Murray, Steve Buscemi, Cate Blanchett MGM Studios

Among the standouts of the film is Cate Blanchett doing double duty in her short as plays not only herself but also her cousin, dealing with jealousy at Blanchett's career. In short, rockers Jack and Meg White discuss the genius of Nikola Tesla.

The finest part of the collection is the hilarious conversation between Alfred Molina and Steve Coogan as they discuss genealogy and political correctness. The film features conversations after conversation of insanely comedic one-liners and thoughtful insights into the daily lives of the famous people who inhabit Jarmusch's black-and-white world of coffee and cigarettes.

The DVD features a lackluster collection of extras, all the more disappointing when you learn of the film's 17-year journey to the DVD format. Nary is there a commentary or documentary to be seen; instead, audiences are treated to a short music video entitled "Tabletops" and features, of all things, a collection of footage of the tabletops seen throughout the film.

Also included is a short and rather unflattering Bill Murray outtake, a pointless interview with actor Taylor Mead and a theatrical trailer. In such an entertaining film, the DVD is a letdown. Unless the film accumulates an incredibly large fan following in the home video market, don't expect a better version any time soon.

Fans of any of the film's actors or the director are highly recommended to pick the film up. "Coffee and Cigarettes" is a high point in the career of everybody involved.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED ARTISTS
 In "Coffee & Cigarettes," rappers **RZA** and **GZA** (left, middle) discuss alternative medicine with **Bill Murray**.

exposure.



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