Matthew Sweet talks about his excellent *Girlfriend*

MATTHEW SWEET


By Chris Robenga

Matthew Sweet is one of the more overlooked music's critical and popular successes is the energetic first track of Sweet's album, "Divine Intervention," and another personal and musically exciting collection of songs was one of the better albums of the last year and I welcomed the chance to speak with Sweet about his great work. One of the greatest strengths of *Girlfriend* is the ability of the instantly memorable melodies, strikingly intimate lyrics, and exceptionally strong guitarists to cut across generic boundaries. Sweet admitted that one possible reason for the disparity between his music's critical and popular successes is the difficulty of classifying what type of music *Girlfriend* actually is, saying "that keeps a lot of people from selling records, because radio doesn't play too much of those names. "To me it's kind of a rock and roll style and I thought that we should call it 'Winona' because I liked the movie *Heathers.*" Sweet explained. "I didn't have a title for a long time and he knew that I liked the movie *Heathers.* He thought that we should call it 'Winona' because I wanted a kind of a country title and at the time I was a little more obscure. First of all it didn't occur to me that there would be a lot of people giving attention to anything I did. And second of all it didn't occur to me that people would think that it was about her. Then by the time the record came out she had actually seen the song on the radio and supposedly liked it so I thanked my friend for sending it to her because at the time I didn't think the record was even going to come out. It was a really dark period and I thought, 'Well at least Winona Ryder heard my record.' "

Sweet admitted that many people did think that the track was a love song written expressively for Winona Ryder. "When I'm writing songs I don't usually think about any sort of graphically." and sample tests. So you'll spend every minute and every dollar getting ready for the test that you'll actually take.

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