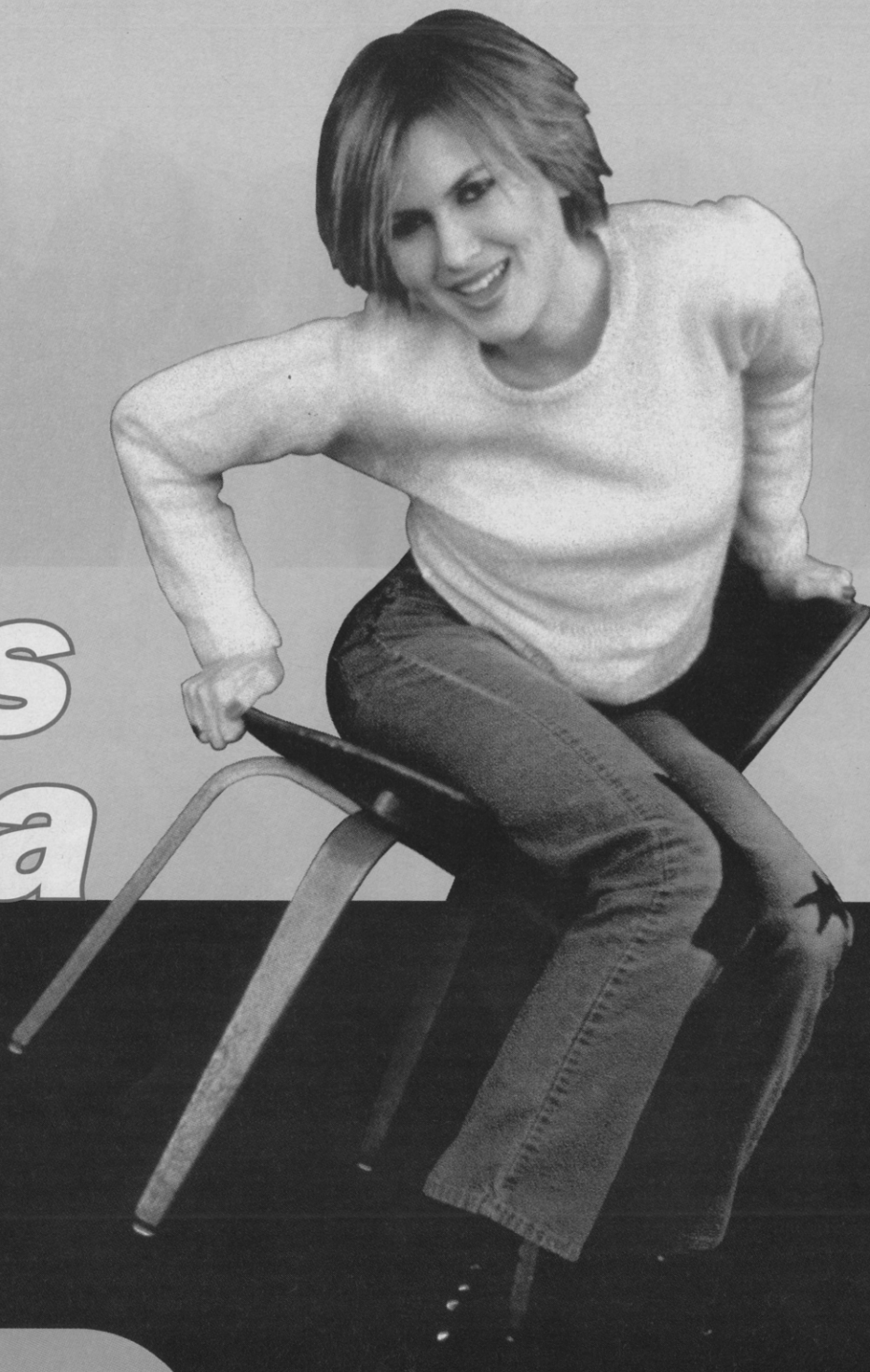


# Juliana's Nirvana



**O**nly Everything. This is what music means to Juliana Hatfield and this is what she has entitled her latest album. Forget the sweet angst tunes of her previous releases *Hey Babe* and *Become What You Are*. Juliana has a distortion pedal, and she's gonna use it.

*Only Everything* is a welcome surprise departure from her previous offerings (even though both *Hey Babe* and *Become What You Are* were both enjoyed muchly). It's powerful, focused and beautiful — all at once. No longer is Juliana singing sweetly about baby birdies, sisters and fashion models. She's onto the real gritty shit now — depression ('Live On Tomorrow'), relationships ('My Darling'), dumb-fucks ('Dumb Fun'), junkie friends ('Dying Proof'), and even has a song alluding to sexy things (but she sings in French, so the less cultured among us can only guess) called 'Fleur De Lys'. Was it penned in French to disguise it's saucy content?

"It's slightly saucy yeah," she says with a smile in her voice.

(We have worked out it says something about the juice of two oranges, a man and three chocolate croissants.)

Juliana is talking to me from her home in New York City. She's moved from her home town of Boston to revel in the madness that is New York. I wonder how someone so seemingly sensitive copes in New York and if it has changed her at all.

"Well, it hasn't really. I'm still pretty much the same loser that I was. It's scary living anywhere in this day and age. Being here is good because there's this feeling of energy. There's stuff going on — important art being made, people are working on good stuff. It drives me to be creative, y'know."

What was the cause of the demise of the Juliana Hatfield Three?

"Well my drummer left [Juliana's relationship with drummer Todd had somewhat diminished] and then it wasn't the Three any more. I decided I wanted to expand. I basically made the [*Only Everything*] with just me and my bass player, and we brought in a couple different drummers. It was just obvious it wasn't really one band any more, it was me overseeing a revolving door of characters."

Juliana's guitar playing on *Only Everything*

is nothing less than astounding (not bad — for a girl, as Prince would say). It features some of the best riffs, melodies and especially songwriting I've heard in ages. It's what she's always been capable of (and hinting at), but has never quite achieved previously.

Juliana must realise she's improved vastly — so much so people may come to a conclusion that it isn't her playing those huge guitar squalls at all. On the sleeve of her album she's written 'all guitars by Juliana'. Did she feel this was necessary because people might assume there was some 'guitar guy' helping out — not giving credit where credit's due?

"Yeah. I just wanted to make it clear because already I've read things people have said (people who've had the advance tape and didn't have the [sleeve] information there). Stuff like: 'Oh, Juliana's new guitar player turned his distortion up.' I knew I'd get that kind of reaction so I made it clear I [played all the guitars]."

Was this album more enjoyable for you to make as opposed to the other ones? Did you go into the studio knowing you were armed with a whole lotta good songs?

"Yeah, it was really fun and it had a lot less stress than making the other albums. Everything went smoothly and fell into place. It was pretty easy."

If you didn't have the talent to make music, what sort of a person would you be?

"I think I'd be a vegetable and rotting. I would just shrivel up and die."

What about if you were a totally even, happy person?

"I think maybe I wouldn't have the need to make music any more — if I were happy all the time."

Do you ever have times when you experience writer's block, when you can't get ideas or music out?

"I experience frustration when I'm trying to get an idea across, but I never get that pan-

icky feeling, that: 'Oh my god, I can't write any more.' Even when I can't write I know it's just a phase, and I know I'll be able to write again soon. It'll never run out. I'll always be able to write something."

If you're feeling a certain way and you listen to a certain someone's song, you often feel like you have an affinity with them because they're experiencing the same emotions as you are. You're one of the few songwriters or bands that can project feelings and turn them into a great song emotionally. Do you feel happy about that?

"Well, sometimes it makes me happy, but I don't really get enough reaction. I don't know what people think of me really. I actually would like some more reaction. [Pauses] I wish everybody loved me, but they don't."

Does the fickleness of the music industry and all that comes with it bring you down sometimes?

"Yeahhh. It makes me forget sometimes the original joy I had. The business really wants to kill your enthusiasm and you have to be careful to not let it kill the joy in [the music]."

Do you enjoy or dislike the trappings that go with putting out an album — the videos, the interviews and the people at magazines who want to take pictures of you?

"Well... it can be enjoyable but it also makes me feel like I'm being pushed around. I feel a little bit manipulated by all of that stuff. It doesn't come naturally. Making a video doesn't come naturally to me like music does, but it can be fun. We've just done one for 'Universal Heart Beat' and I did it with a friend of mine. It was not unpleasant."

On 'Live on Tomorrow' you mention being dumped in the ocean tied to a piano. Did you per chance see Jane Campion's movie *The Piano*?

"Yeah, that was reference to that 'cause that was such an amazing image, y'know. I love that movie."

Is it hard for you to express your feelings to the world by making records and playing live?

"I feel like making music is the only way I can feel any emotion. I don't know any other way to do it, so it's easier to do it through music, but it's still hard... I hold back a lot and there's a lot that doesn't come out through the music either... yet [little laugh]."

What about stage fright?

"I don't really get scared in front of big crowds, but I get scared in front of TV. Like, sometimes I get scared if were doing a taped show for TV, 'cause it's all so far away and there's just a buncha cameras in your face. I get nervous before I play alone, if I'm just doing a show by myself, but if the band's there I feel fine."

I tell Juliana about why 'You Blues' is my favourite track on *Only Everything*. It has to do with me driving along in a haze, singing it, and nearly having an old bugged crash into me. I experienced the weird feeling of skidding along in fourth really fast, then stopping and discovering I was still singing along afterwards, like nothing had happened.

"That's excellent. Was it a bad crash? Did he bang into you?"

No, I was just driving along singing and he nearly banged into me.

Juliana giggles. "That's so cool. My favourite is 'Simplicity is Beautiful'. I love that one."

Are *Hey Babe* and *Become What You Are* albums you don't like now?

"I like things about them. They're just hard to listen to and hard to go back to 'cause they're from my past. It's like going back and looking at yourself as a younger person and being embarrassed by yourself."

Do you hope this won't happen with this album?

"I'm sure it will. I know it will... it always does."

SHIRLEY CHARLES