



By **Stephanie King**

Scouting for Girls have taken a beating for their poppy, cheeky-chappy music, so new single [This Ain't A Love Song](#) appears to be their attempt at being all adult and sensitive. Naturally the result is a track boasting all the emotional depth of a teacup.

Its unpromising start, lifted straight from Keane's [Somewhere Only We Know](#), drenches the listener in a deluge of slushy strings. There's the scene-setting opening verse, in which a young lady packs her bags as lead singer Roy Stride despairs that they *"threw it all away"*

. Gentle guitars and tense piano tinkles swiftly rise into stabbing chords and ompah-pah drums, soaring into the obligatory string section and swooning, *"oooooh"*
-infested chorus.

An identical second verse tells the hackneyed tale of re-growth following aforementioned break-up, with the promise that Roy will be *"coming back to life"*. A dribbly power-ballad refrain of

never keep me down"

"You can try but you can

is

backed by

[Noel Gallagher](#)

-style echoes, before a knees-up, lighters-aloft la-la-la-la sing-along sends

This Ain't A Love Song

to its all-too-predictable climax.

Songwriting 101 dictates that the central crescendo should always be followed by a minimalist a capella reprise of the main chorus, just to ensure that the return to stadium guitars and flowery strings really hits home. A warbling chorus of *"It's aaallrrrrriiiiiggghhht"* ensures crowd participation at festivals, and a neat ending wraps the song up in three minutes, guaranteeing

airplay.

The song is peppered with cringe-inducing half-rhymes of "accusations/frustrations", "losing/confusion", "frightin'/frightened"

, ending with the embarrassment of
"I know I'm lost but I'm waiting to be found"
, not to mention the chorus' mockney
"I'm a blaaahdy big mess inside"

If anyone fancies some more emotional manipulation just check out the video, filmed at an airport, full of 'real' people stricken with 'real emotion', all the more stomach-churning for being a nasty reminder of [Love Actually](#). It's enough to reduce me to tears.

The song's place at number one is testimony to the triumph of cosy, familiar crowd-pleasers over anything remotely interesting. Because we've heard all this before. All that whining heartbreak and staged emotion, conveyed through angst-ridden guitars, epic strings and intrusive piano nudges has been haunting the charts since 90s adult pop starting stalking characters in American teen TV series.

Listening to *This Ain't A Love Song*, I can see it playing as a pouting Dawson-of-the-enormous-forehead moans to Joey, "I'm an artist; torture is a prerequisite" (actual quote). It's in the same league as The Fray's [How To Save A Life](#); gooley, gutless pseudo-romantic crap that makes advertising executives wet themselves.

But here's the truth. I loved *Dawson's Creek*. And [The O.C.](#) And *One Tree Hill*. I have a squishy soft spot for indie-incidentals-music-used-in-US-teen-dramas.

[Vanessa Carlton](#)

anyone?

[Goo Goo Dolls](#)

?

[The Calling](#)

? Everyone's allowed at least one dirty habit.

So, sappy and soulless though it may be, *This Ain't A Love Song* is Song of the Week because, behind my sneering facade, I actually rather like this snivelling excuse for a song. If only it had been released ten years ago – I can guarantee it would have soundtracked a montage of Marissa Cooper and Ryan Atwood snogging and crying. Now, where's the

My So-Called Life

box set?