

# 'American Dreams' greatest '60s hits

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**T**HESSE days, it's hard to find a TV show that hasn't released a soundtrack.

From youthful "Smallville" to "Survivor," "CSI" and "Crossing Jordan" — not to mention "American Idol" — a TV show has got to put out a soundtrack CD if it wants to be hip.

But no show this season is better suited to a soundtrack than "American Dreams," the smart, sexy family drama set during the early '60s when the biggest dream of a teenage girl living in Philadelphia was to dance on "American Bandstand."

Music isn't just used as random snippets in the background — it's the centerpiece of every episode.

Thanks to clever editing and stunt casting of rising pop stars, the show has featured everyone from the Beach Boys singing "Don't Worry Baby" in a vintage clip to B2K posing as the Temptations doing "My Girl."

Putting those new-old TV performances on a CD — including brand-new covers by Vanessa Carlton (doing Dusty Springfield's "Wishin' and Hopin'"), Duncan Sheik (swinging Bobby Darin's "Beyond the Sea") and India.Arie (delivering Nina Simone's protest anthem "Come Ye") — was a natural.

Cleverest of all, the show's star Brittany Snow (alongside costar Vanessa Langeis, who plays Roxanne) singing backup vocals for Christian-crossover artist Stacie Orrico when she sings the Angels' hit "My Boyfriend's Back."

The performances are not

slavish to the originals — but they are close enough that some viewers are surprised to find out that, say, Duncan Sheik wasn't lip-synching a Bobby Darin record but actually singing himself.

As well, all the songs are historically accurate to the time the show is set. This season, it's 1963 and '64. The show's creator Jonathan Prince says the release date — May 6, at the end of the first season rather than the beginning of the second — is no accident.

"The soundtrack comes out just in time for May sweeps, just in time for a summer rush and just in time for repeats over the summer," says Prince, who adds that Universal is shipping 150,000 copies.

"So you buy the soundtrack, you watch some of [the episodes] on television again and hopefully you're prepped for the fall."

He also said to expect a release of the first season on DVD as fall approaches.

Prince pitched "American Dreams" to cover one family from Kennedy's assassination to Nixon's resignation — a nine-year run.

"The plan is every year to do a soundtrack of the best songs — both the covers that we did and the originals. By the end of however long we've been on the air, you'll have a nice collection of greatest hits."

**Vivienne Groen (top) as Brenda ("Every Little Bit Hurts") Holloway, Vanessa Carlton (middle) as Dusty Springfield and India.Arie as Nina Simone.**

