



The queen of eccentricity has released another album, *Strange Animals*: almost the strangest one yet.

"Monkey's Paw" features a dancish beat that is surprisingly fluffy. Bleah. Wait! This isn't all that bad. Tribal pop-drums and aborigine back-up vocals contribute to the cunning twists of the lyrics: a "discussion" of re-incarnation. The Spanish pseudo-accent and instruments are worth noting as well.

The best cut, "Coolsville", is the definition of artistic sparsity. Nothing over-bearing about this one: everyone who hears it likes it right off. A muffled metallic tapping sets the base rhythm and brings the whole thing together. The base, suitably subdued, complements Laurie's ethereal vocals excellently. The use of echoing throughout the song creates structural integrity; not many songs can do that and get away sounding good.

"Ramon" has a nice intro and interesting messages; try it! The background swish-a-swish-a's deserve commendation as well.

"... I ran into my place and I said 'Hey! Is there anybody home?' Nobody answered, but I guess that's not too bad; since I live along ..." is an excerpt from "Beautiful Red Dress." Weird. This appears to be an attack (yet another) on sexual discrimination. Sooo sorry... Laurie! Did you know that, "it'll be the year 3088 before we make a buck, but hey..." (comparing the current ratio of wages between sexes).

HEEEERE WE GO!!!! *The Residents*!!!! Well the synths were close. Oh no! It decayed into quasi-gospel-techno-growl-power-industrial-hypno-thrash, well quasi-gospel-growl at least. MUCH too light for serious music listeners. "The Day The Devil" is the cut; redeeming features: said growly noises in the middle third, bird chirping samples, and theme in general...

Valium Valium VALIUM!!!! You thought the *Cowboy Junkies* were mellow?! "The Dream Before," is 98% sleepy time tunes. The 2% left consisting of about 10 seconds of deep (for her, anyway) voiced vocals. I suppose it would fit right before "Twitch (Version 2.0)" from *Ministry*: a definite heightening of the "impact" of both songs! "Mega-nightmares from Hell," you say? Bingo...

All in all, the album is an acoustic work that deserves good mention and keeps within the expectations most people have of her...with little transgressions here and there...Buy me! Buy me!

Review by
Dave "Duane"



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