

Mp3 Hecate's Angels - Hidden Persuader



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Featuring the keyboard, song and vocal work renowned from her cd's with Stan Ridgway and others... and also Drywall's own "Sorceress of Sound,"... musician/ songwriter PIETRA WEXSTUN spins a moody and provocative song cycle we can all get stuck in. 11 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Trance, ROCK: Psychedelic Details: This is the "HIDDEN PERSUADER" album by HECATE'S ANGELS. This album features production and performance by PIETRA WEXSTUN of DRYWALL The STAN RIDGWAY BAND. Ridgway guests on several tracks. ----- ARTICLE ON PIETRA and "HIDDEN PERSUADER" - ENTERTAINMENT TODAY Pietra Wexstun is the driving force behind Hecate's Angels - she sings, writes, and plays keyboards and a mean theremin for the band, who reside on Sierra Madre-based Birdcage Records. Wexstun is quite fascinating, both musically and existentially. "It all began many light years ago, in another galaxy.." Wexstun reflects. I've had a lot of intense experiences. Part of it is having grown up on two continents. My father is from Italy. He's a poet and professor of Italian literature. He'd read Dante's Inferno and Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience to my brother and me as bedtime stories. My mother is American. She was an opera singer. That's where all the early musical stuff comes from. When I began listening to the radio and hanging out with friends at school, I began rebelling against the classical straightjacketing and got into a lot of folk, blues, and rock stuff. I used to drive my mom crazy with my Carter family records. I listened to Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and the Beatles first, then all the psychedelic bands like Country Joe and the Fish, the Doors, and, of course, Hendrix. When I got to college, I began listening to a lot of avant-garde composers like Luciano Berio. He was a sound collagist who would juxtapose lines from Beckett plays against Mahler symphonies, and then throw in people screaming. It was an early form of sampling. "I had a band in college called Uncle Daddy and the Moon People. (laughs) We called it "Appalachian Nightmare Music."

It had the Cramps' creepiness fused with a lonesome hillbilly sound, like people up in the hills drinking too much moonshine and hallucinating. Then I joined the short-lived, but legendary Neptune Society - all we did were John Barry covers. He's the guy who wrote all the music for the James Bond films. We had to "cease and desist" when lawyers from the cremation and burial service we took the name from showed up at a gig." Wexstun then explained the genesis of her long, fruitful friendship with another less than ordinary figure - Stan Ridgway. "Stan and I met at a Charlie Musselwhite concert at the Troubadour. A friend of mine knew the doorman there, and he used to let us in. My friend was dating Stan's roommate, who also worked at the Troubadour. When Stan showed up, we started talking and found out we had a lot in common. That was 20 years ago. I knew him before he formed Wall of Voodoo." And how has Ridgway influenced her musical career? "Oh, a lot! In fact I think we've both influenced each other. I've performed with Stan's solo band since 1986. Then last year we formed Drywall. There's a shared sensibility in terms of our approach. We both have an interest in creating an atmospheric bed where one can tell a story, explore an emotion. It isn't so much about chops and solos. It's about melody and texture. Hidden Persuader, the Hecate's Angels debut record, upholds that philosophy. It is fraught with mysterious, enigmatic sensibilities and sounds. Hecate is, after all, the Greek goddess of sorcery and witchcraft. Wexstun jokes that she has been referred to as the "sonic sorceress." "I've always been fascinated by strange, eerie sounds, from the first time I blew air over a coke bottle, you know, those sounds you discover when you're a kid. When I started fooling around with analog synths, because of all the oscillators, knobs and faders, I was able to elicit those same kind of spooky, quasi-human, wounded animal voices. It was great!" Many of those voices also come from the theremin, an odd-looking, spherical instrument, which Wexstun plays with both grace and intensity. "Oh the theremin - the first time I played the theremin, I had actually borrowed Stan's. He had one of those with the metal plates. He sold it, and now I hear that they go for about \$4,000.00 I found a guy in Milwaukee who makes them for considerably less, and now I have a sort of globular-looking one. It works by moving your hand in the vicinity of two oscillators operating at a radio frequency. One is constant and one is varied. The variable oscillator frequency changes by the motion of your hand. The difference between the two is an audio tone. "The theremin was actually the first electronic instrument. There's a movie about Leon Theremin, the Russian guy who invented it and this amazing virtuoso/a, Clara Rockmore, who would actually play the thing with symphony orchestras. It's a wonderful instrument, and I love the mysterious place it takes me to." The

Angels themselves are as temperamental as the theremin. "We refer to ourselves as a loose confederation of loose cannons. We never know where fate will take us. We shift and change and find our way back to each other, kind of like wax in a lava lamp." The blobs are as interesting as the main light source. "Pat Answers," Pietra says brightly, "he's the guitarist. He's from Poway, CA. Now he lives in Venice Beach, but I met him in Berkeley. He was in a band called The Nude Man, based on a real guy who used to go to all his classes on the Berkeley campus in the nude as a form of protest. Pat's done gigs on Mexican cruise ships and played the Mission Bay Circuit in San Diego and lounges in Las Vegas. He goes through phases where he hates music and decides he's going to chuck it all and buy a chicken ranch. He has periods of intense anti-social behavior, but he's a good guitarist. "Bill Blatt, he's a Minneapolis funk meister. Jeffrey Grennan, he's from Chicago. He was in a band called the Toreador Reptiles - like Tijuana Brass meets Ennio Morricone doing bebop. Elmo Smith (drums) is from Detroit , 'nuff said - and James T. Hill (also drums), he's from Alabama. He just did a thing for the new Jackie Chan movie trailer. He's really into hot percussion, violence, and action. "Then, of course, there's Stan Ridgway. He plays harmonica and banjo on the record. Banjo was one of the first instruments he played as a kid. He'd just bought a new one and wanted to try it out. " While Wexstun enjoys composing music for L.A. art installations (such as Christi Ava's Nice Ladies in Cages and Barry Fahr's Visuadelia) and the cosy confines of Birdcage Records, how would she feel about being successful? "Success is a state of mind. I just love music. I try to stay focused on the music." ----- Occasionally an album will come along which oozes out of the stereo, wafts around the room and takes you somewhere familiar, but somewhere you've never been before. Hidden Persuader, the debut album from US band Hecate's Angels is one such gem. It's a slab of psychosonic sorcery just perfect for a quiet night alone with your dreams or those awkward waking hours waiting for sunrise after a night on the tiles when for some reason you just can't sleep. Named after Hecate (Heh-ca-tee), the Greek Goddess of sorcery and witchcraft, the band's sound is a kinky marriage of underworld ambience and pop, a union which manages to surprise without ever resorting to shock for shock's sake. Lead Angel, Pietra Wexstun teases an astonishing array of sounds from her organ, autoharp, melodica and theremin (that whooping, wailing instrument which leant an illicit drug buzz to Good Vibrations and saturated a trilogy of torch songs on Portishead's debut) and her lyrics boldly examine issues such as narcissistic desire, discovery and the nature of pleasure. Hidden Persuader owes much of its exotic power to its middle eastern scales which swirl around the room

conjuring up images of a Sultan's lush palace filled with belly dancers, demented dervishes and a thick curtain of hookah smoke. Hidden Persuader is a lushly stimulating trip into an Orphean underworld - and you don't even have to leave home to go. NY PRESS ----- Hecate's Angels make their debut with Hidden Persuader, a remarkable collection of recordings from the band's extensive sonic archives. Under the guidance of vocalist Pietra Wexstun (Drywall, the Stan Ridgway Quintet, and the Moon People), the album is a compelling and mysterious musical odyssey through uncharted psychic terrain. A bold mix of ambient pieces and pop music kissed by chaos, Hidden Persuader takes the listener on a journey through that dream world presided over by the greek goddess Hecate, a land where familiar sounds mingle and shift against steady, pulsing beats and breaths. Starting with Oracle, their opening track, the band invites you to turn on, tune and follow the siren's wail... -----

Featuring the keyboard and vocal work of Drywall's own "Sorceress of Sound," Pietra Wexstun, accompanied by Elmo Smith on drums and percussion, Bill Blatt on acoustic bass, Pat Answers on guitar and Jeffrey Grennan on woodwinds and saxes. James T. Hill is credited as co-producer and contributes drums and percussion. Stan Ridgway plays some banjo and harmonica, too.

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