

Mp3 Artichoke - 26 Scientists Volume One Anning - Malthus



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Indie pop concept record of scientist biographies -- one for every letter of the alphabet -- in the tradition of the Beatles, Pixies, Breeders, Beck, Cake, the Fall, the Talking Heads, Wire, and Robyn Hitchcock. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Beatles-pop, POP: 80's Pop Details: On Sunday we celebrated the release of Artichoke's "26 Scientists Volume One Anning - Malthus" with a waffle brunch followed by a living room concert. Friends from all over LA were here -- kids banging on drums, men in leather and rubber smiling through the porch windows -- and the accoustics of the living room improved greatly by all those bodies. Sometimes I daydream that Terry Gross, host of NPR's "Fresh Air," is asking me how and why I began writing 26 loosely biographical songs about scientists, one for every letter of the alphabet. "Well, Terry," I reply as if we were old chums, "it was a bit of a songwriting stunt. The abecedarium, as the A to Z structure is called, has long been a popular device in kid's books, as well as with one of my favorite artists, Edward Gorey. These days when I sit down to write a song -- starting with some rhythmic grunting and a little semi-melodious wailing -- I ask myself, 'Is this a scientist song?' About half the time it is, in which case it's research time. Did you know that when Isaac Newton died, he was a virgin who had neglected to write a will? And that all his furniture was covered with dark red velvet? Can't wait to work that into Volume Two." Before she can tell me how amusing this all is, and how great the songs are, my daydream ends abruptly. There's a telephone in my hand, but Terry Gross is gone and I'm on hold with a credit card company. Ten years ago I bought a guitar in Pittsburgh. It came with a free ice cube tray. I already knew how to make ice cubes. Then we moved to Los Angeles to get away from all the flakey Pittsburgh posers and find someplace real. Six years ago, I starting playing shows with a band that for some reason I called Artichoke. Several bass players and guitar players have come and gone, as well as

about 3 dozen drummers. I played most the instruments on "26 Scientists Volume One: Anning - Malthus," but it's not a solo project. The following amazing musicians gave the record life: Steve Collins -- an actual scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratories -- built his own theremin which he plays on tracks 4 and 5. Sharon McGunigle -- performance artist -- plays accordion on tracks 3, 6 and 7, plays toy piano on track 12, and sings with me on 6 and 7. If you saw the Beastie Boys on their 2004 world tour, you experienced percussionist Alfredo Ortiz, whose drums appear on tracks 6, 7, 12 and 13. Drummer Gerry Porter steps in for tracks 1, 4, 8 and 9. Peter Kelly co-wrote track 7 and 13, and plays guitar on tracks 6, 7, 12 and 13. Jeff Orgill co-wrote track 6. Ben Eisen plays bass on tracks 6, 7, 12 and 13. Allison Achauer designed the new CD and our website. So that's how it all happened, kiddies. There once was a band called the Beatles, and then a bit later the Talking Heads, and then the Pixies, and then some kid named Beck. And if you dig their stuff, maybe you'll dig Artichoke. Maybe you should throw your tent, sleeping bag and our new CD into your car and hit the road for Utah. Dinosaurs are preserved underground there! And come see us play if you wander near Los Angeles. Many thanks to family, friends and fans. And coffee. Timothy Sellers Artichoke Los Angeles, February 26, 2005

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