

Mp3 Lucid Nation - Tacoma Ballet



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"A punk rock Exile on Main Street with shades of The Stooges, riot grrrl, Pere Ubu, and even The Doors." Magnet Magazine 32 MP3 Songs ROCK: Punk, ROCK: Psychedelic Details: Lucid Nation's Tacoma Ballet was #1 on the NMW college and secondary commercial radio stations chart December 2002 with more spins than Ryan Adams, The Breeders, The Donnas, The Vines, Beck, or The Pixies! "A punk rock Exile on Main Street with shades of The Stooges, riot grrrl, Pere Ubu, and even The Doors." Magnet Magazine "If Spivey sounds spacey, she's not. Her songs range from aggressive, screaming punk to beautifully melodic rhythm and blues, the very definition of garage-rock. Like Sleater-Kinney and Bikini Kill -- Lucid Nation has opened for both -- her band's music is raw, poetic, sloppy and infectious, and Tacoma Ballet is simply a bare-bones, kick-ass rock and roll record." Rolling Stone "100 Bands You Need to Know 2002" Alternative Press "Early Patti Smith trapped at a Godspeed You Black Emperor rehearsal." L.A. Weekly "Though Spivey's soft, pale features and casual demeanor sharply contrast bewitching dark-haired progenitors Patti Smith, PJ Harvey, and Diamanda Galas, she appropriates the same reckless autonomous spirit and hard-fought freedom these highly individual renegades do." Aquarian Weekly "A vivid portrait of conservative America from the point-of-view of a politically aware youth culture that still can't quite get over itself. And, most importantly, it's a great rock record that's not afraid to stir up a little controversy." All Music Guide "the jaw dropping one in a million talent of this band is poet/vocalist Tamra Spivey. Her squeals, punk howls, growls, and soft cajoling steal the spotlight. Like a Marianne Faithful full of wild abandon or a Courtney Love with more soul and a wider variety of tonal deliveries, she sounds like she's wringing out every pore and gland to get her visceral message across. Wailing through angry, sultry, mournful, demanding, accusatory, she sounds like a demented street sage baring her soul with wide open screams while hiding angel wings of delicate beauty under a shabby, dirty raincoat."

Tangerine Magazine "Tacoma Ballet marks one of the year's strangest and most fulfilling releases. In an age in which karaoke-spouting no-talents from an imbecilic tv show top the charts, we need all the Lucid Nations we can get." Fort Worth Weekly "Lucid Nation locks into some grooves here that remind me of The Standells, and others that remind me of Brix-era Fall records, and any group that can do both is ace with me." Ink 19 "In spirit Tacoma straddles closer to the Rolling Stone's Exile on Main Street. Both weave dense, murky long-range affairs requiring effort to maneuver, but that reward in droves. Kim Shattuck and Kurt Cobain birthed a baby, named her Tamra and watched her unleash an ungodly guttural growl. No serene tea-party melody from this girl, just a wondrous, primal voice to behold. Tacoma shifts a kaleidoscope of moods mainly, a rumbling, crashing cacophony at times, others, as haunting and esoteric as muffled snippets caught in the breeze." Girlpunk.com "Gems are sprinkled throughout - the rawking "Seven Stringer"; the pensive "Fall"; the spacey "Mr. Slow"; the atypical but inventive K Records stylings of "Problematic." Throw in some clichés and a liberal Stones cover set to the chords of an old Cure song, and you have a double CD which doesn't quite sound like anything you've ever heard before." Inkblot Magazine "... a double CD set of 30 stellar anti-punk, post-rock, quasi-jazz songs that ironically are astonishing examples of what works in punk, rock and jazz. The music is comprised of instrumentation blessed with wanderlust and spontaneity but is anchored with Tamra's gritty and visceral vocals. At their worst, Lucid Nation crafts top-notch bursts of distorted bliss. At their best, they join artists like Pete Townsend and Frank Zappa (with a hint of The Germs) as architects of "literary rock." Extreme Music "Some raw make. Loved it." Billy Picture, San Francisco Examiner "That squeak - that little jump right off of a cliff right off the bat - on "Favorite Star" rubs me the wrong way too. But it feels like the right way. All over me it sets off a rush of chills. Is this whole goddamn thing a satire? A parody? A joke? Hell, it's two discs so full of smiling menace that it seems to want to hug you while quietly trying to yank your molars right out of your fucking jawbone." BangsSheet "... a big ol' whopping double CD set chock full of experimental noise and loose, out-of-control, sassy rock music. Members of this band have either played with or were in bands such as Hole, Ministry, Unseen Force, L7, Debbie Harry. Singer Tamra Spivey is definitely the focal point. Her loose and intense vocals remind us in many ways of Johnny Rotten. She's got attitude in a bucket and enough balls and guts to spit out whatever she feels like with cool convincing urgency. This stuff certainly isn't going to appeal to everyone ... but the folks who dig it are going to REALLY dig it. definitely a word of mouth act at the moment, we could see BIG things happening for

Lucid Nation. (Rating: 4+++)" LMNOP ***** Tacoma Ballet

by Lucid Nation Brainfloss Records Reviewed by Randy Roark Randy Roark was Allen Ginsberg's assistant for over seventeen years. He worked for William Burroughs too. He hosted a popular psychedelic radio show, and is editor of For Immediate Release, a respected monthly online poetry journal. Will "Tacoma Ballet" be the Nation's break-out record? Could be. It's certainly their most cohesive, coherent, and mature release, and also my personal favorite. And at 135 minutes and 32 tracks, it's not a minute too long. The most remarkable fact about "Tacoma Ballet" is that it, like all of Lucid Nation's live and studio work over the last three years, was completely improvised in the studio--and I mean completely improvised, including the extensive lead vocals (there are no instrumentals here). Jazz has featured album-length free improvisations for years, but never to my knowledge with full, improvised lyrics. Rock bands such as King Crimson, the Patti Smith Group, and The Doors have all incorporated improvisational passages into their live shows and studio recordings. But no one, as far as I know, has ever recorded a document of this length with lyrics and music improvised simultaneously in the studio. Over the course of five CDs now, the two constants in Lucid Nation have been Tamra Spivey on vocals and occasional guitar and bass, and Ronnie Pontiac on guitar, some songwriting, and occasional vocals. On this outing they traveled to Tacoma, Washington (their first recordings outside their native L.A.) to record with Wes Weresch at Uptone Studios, and were joined by Patty Schemel of Hole on drums, Greta Brinkman of Moby's touring band on bass, Larry Schemel on second guitar, Diane Naegel on keyboards, and Kayla Tabb on occasional percussion. It's one hell of a solid band, and in every song at least one player steps up to surprise you. The two CDs of "Tacoma Ballet" have their own titles from Gertrude Stein's last words-- "What's the answer?" and "What's the question?"--but it's up to the individual listener to decide for themselves why a particular song appears on one or the other of the disks, and what in fact these titles might mean in relation to what they're hearing. I have my own theory, and that is that the songs were recorded in more or less chronological order. I do know that the journey we go on has a sense of being a real journey that follows a certain particular sequence of events, like real life does. And by the end we have traveled all the way from politics and culture to private midnight anxieties ("why can't I keep friends?"). Tamra begins at her most confrontational, singing of claustrophobia, of ties that bind, of being stuck in something old, of having reached the end of something. But by the time we get to the opening song of "What's the question?" it seems that Tamra has decided the answer is to "try something

new before we die." And so the last songs seem to be about the scary pleasures of getting out, of finding release. By the final track (significantly entitled "Shelter") I felt like I had just heard rock's first novel. But to describe these CDs in literary terms is to do a disservice to the fact that "Tacoma Ballet" is above all a genre-hopping journey through country blues, Ramonesesque punk, dark psychedelia, electronic sound collage, with a very strong nod to the Rolling Stones, including a loopy deconstruction of "Happy" off "Exile on Main Street," and, perhaps most of all, a blending of the aggressive, menacing bass sound of Peter Hook at the height of Joy Division and the band's general enthusiasm for all things Pere Ubu. And this is probably one of the few bands who understand that my reference is to both Pere Ubus: the band and the founder of dada. In fact, the CD rips open with "Happy Accident" a song about what it's like to actually live the life contemplated by our dadaist and situationist forebears—a life of complete improvisation. I've heard a tape of a Lucid Nation radio broadcast a year ago that began with "Children of the Night"—a song about getting lost in a downpour on the way to the studio and the various emotional reactions to the situation inside the bus, an incredibly candid account. I got the feeling that Tamra was, in a way, working magic on every member of the band to bring their emotions to the surface so that they could be used as fuel. Improvisation in a rock format has all the perils of spontaneity, but multiplied by six or seven factors. Each member has to listen to all of the others and play at the same time, if only by keeping quiet. In addition, improvisation is a two-edged sword because it creates a picture of your mind. When someone asked Kerouac how a piece of spontaneous prose could have a form, he answered "mind is shapely, art is shapely." As for the contents of Tamra's mind this time out, we begin with the vague dread and paranoia common to many works of art created in the days preceding 9/11. And in at least one example truly worthy of Blake (or Kafka), the song "Manzanar Recess" is about the fascist underpinnings of concepts like "homeland" defense (using those words), and how the government will soon know where we are and what we're doing "24/7." (For those unfamiliar with Manzanar, it was a United States concentration camp built in the California desert where we interned Japanese nationals for the duration of World War II.) On "Tacoma Ballet," Ronnie Pontiac's guitar sound is more stellar than ever—able to crunch with the best of them like AC/DC in one song and then to hammer and bend the strings into waves of ethereal beauty on the next. With such a strong rhythm section, on later tracks he forays deep into the use of "rhyming" harmonics and drones and gentle feedback to float shimmering clouds into the airy spaces inside the songs. Guitarist Larry Schemel, a longtime gem of the Northwestern scene, knows why

the Stooges and early Creedence songs sounded so good: in the early stages of a song he drives the rhythm forward by slyly anticipating its curves and then, after the song has found its shape, he'll tease something new out of it with a flurry of unexpected notes that somehow develop into an entirely new--but always right--direction. Another star of this recording is Greta Brinkman, whose bass lines can be menacing, sinister, and snarling in one moment, and then innocently wandering off to explore the edge of the melody or to create a melody of her own. A surprising new voice is Diane Naegel on keyboards. Reportedly this is her first recording experience and her first appearance in a band context and her first experience playing a musical instrument since she was twelve. She applies tasteful accents on Memorymoog, Prophet 5, piano, and optagan that etch stark moods or toss off witty asides. Her sense of rhythm and crescendo serve the music well. I hope Lucid Nation invites her out on their next tour. Sitting in the middle of a roomful of improvisational musicians anxious to play, drummer Patty Schemel does her job well by keeping the musicians and the song within the same structure and keeping everyone in time. And then, halfway through the second CD, when each of the musicians have begun exploring looser and quieter ways to play, Patty does some exploring too, and the result is like releasing one of those rubberband-driven toys--the entire band shoots off into several different directions all at once, tossing of sparks like a roman-candle. It's the release the musicians, and the audience, have been waiting for. And the journey isn't over yet. When Tamra opens her mouth, every song becomes a Lucid Nation song. And here, over a period exceeding two hours, Tamra uses language as a probe into the center of the human psyche, beginning with daily life inside the grind, which isn't pretty. After three years of experience improvising onstage, Tamra steps into the microphone at full speed, and then finds ways to make it go even faster. Sometimes to surprise herself she paints herself into a corner just for the pleasure of finding some way out. And, in case I've made them sound too stuffy, there is a lot of humor in this music, and a lot of variety. I have my favorite track-"Everyone Has an Area 51," which sounds like a Jim Morrison story channeled through Laurie Anderson. But there are also plenty of hits here including, certainly, "Seven Stringer," "Note to Self," "Absence Breaks the Heart Grown Fonder," "Pharmaceutical Soup," "Kindred," and "30 States in 30 Days." But don't just take my word for it. Pick up a copy and make your own list.

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