

Mp3 Allen Shadow - King Kong Serenade



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Gamy and literate with herculean imagery in the rock-poet genre. 12 MP3 Songs Sway Americana, Sway Acoustic King Kong Serenade Songs Details: Reviews: From: The Daily Freeman Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) RATING: 5 (out of 5) Stars ***** 'King Kong Serenade' endearing poetical missive to NYC By Terry Ross Allen Shadow is a true rock poet, in the tradition of Nick Cave, Dylan, Tom Waits and Walt Whitman, a rock poet who believes rock music is still in its infancy, and hopes his current work will add to the development of the art. On his new CD, "King Kong Serenade," he throws out baby, bath and car seat along with competition for the best nursery schools, singing songs from the seedy, lovely bottom of newly purchased baby dishes, which might have seen duty as ashtrays. Along the way he delves deep in the akashic plain of lore about New York City, a city once filled with opium dens; where lions fought grizzly bears in rat-stomping stadiums on 14th street; anarchists blew up Wall Street and the Bowery Boys established the New York style. At a time when many are wondering about the future of New York City, Shadow's work is a lovely repast, truly--an abnormally poignant journey--through yellow bejeweled images and the splendid squalor of one of the world's greatest microcosms. The album's songs invoke spirits past of Times Sqyare, the Beat writers, jazz greats, the Lower East Side, Coney Island, and the Bronx. For instance, in "Empress of Night," Shadow sings a prophetic love letter to NYC. "she makes sure we see her shadow from the street in the cracked Brooklyn glass Mohammed's face does dance in bomb ticks from time past star-sickened romance eyes, heat, life, chance the subway snakes the tenements." Shadow (a.k.a. Allen Kovler) cut his teeth on the poetry circuit, writing two books of verse: "Harlem River Baby" and "A Heart in the Anteroom", published by Quik Books during the 1980's. His music interests led him to a stint in music city, Nashville, where he wrote for Polygram, Sony, and Mel Tillis' music publishing company. Despite working with such artists as Trisha Yearwood, Shadow, like

many literary song writers before him, ultimately decided Nashville's formulaic canon was too limiting. Consequently, he returned fully to his poetical voice, this time marrying it with the music as he had always intended. This record is a endearing poetical passionate missive written to the city of New York. At a time when she has received many love letters, this is one of the most eloquent of them all. Written before the recent troubles, "King Kong Serenade" meets the new standard of poetry that seems to be developing, which is--how does it play after Sept. 11? The music of Allen Shadow is not affected by infamy--steeped in history and mental reality programming which afflicts every human being right between the eyes. Shadow was truly authentic in the first place. From: The Berkshire Eagle Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Seth Rogovoy Perhaps not since Lou Reed immortalized his cast of street-punks and vagabonds in garage-rock arrangements have images of New York life, from the sidewalks to the subways to the squatter tenements, from Coney Island to the Bronx, been so aptly paired with the sound of crunching guitars, bass and drums. Like Reed, Shadow has the poet's gift for imagery ("Platform cheek to cheek/The paper hides the morning geeks/Signs read in shock speak/Sunglassed to the knees"). Charles Mingus haunts the proceedings, as do Allen Ginsberg, Thelonious Monk and Jack Kerouac, but Shadow is an original storyteller, painting vivid portraits of the romance and terror of life in the world's greatest city. From: All-reviews.com Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) Genre: Alternative Rock RATING: 4 Stars By Keith Hannaleck After years and years of developing his voice, poet turned singer Allen Shadow gives a classic performance that will surely raise some eyebrows in the entertainment sector if his CD "King Kong Serenade" is marketed wisely. Shadow starts off his intense musical and poetical workout with a quirky hardened tune called "Downtown." Trust me; this is not the flowery and upbeat 60's song by Petula Clark. It rocks with passion and the hot burning intensity of a 100 degree sidewalk in the middle of the city. His words are eventful and he sounds like Coney Island baby Lou Reed meets Tom Verlaine after a steamy rockin' Wayne County concert at CBGB's. That's the way I hear Shadows' voice portraying all of his colorful characters in this hypothetical rock Broadway play. His voice and style are unique, and it takes a bit getting used to at first, then it eventually begins to grow on you, and by the third track it all starts to jell into one story. The music is merely the soundtrack that the story uses to bring it all home. The stage is set in New York, and the people that spin the varied musical turntables into motion can be found out walking the streets deep into the night. This kind of story and music couldn't have come at a more needy time, especially for all the

souls in NYC that had their lives snatched away by the insanity of hate and misdirected religious convictions. Although the reality of life in the city is at times cold and hard, it is what it is, and in spite of that people can find solace in the music. This is life with no sugar coating, it's about political conflict, religious zealots and idealist, and it's all about you and me contemplating what is going on around us. Speaking of sugar, "Sugar Street" is an amazing song with words that snap and bite at your consciousness. With passages like- "In the smoke and fishhead morn, the gathering of ghetto boys, whores wail, peddlers call, crime sweats on tenement walls, horses die at their feet, cheap as ants on Sugar Street." Now is that not a snapshot of life in the big city? In a city that never sleeps today is only yesterdays tomorrow. All of it is quite a bit to digest. Shadow makes the process prolific but easier to take in and understand thanks to the musical backdrop and his relaxed vocal style. The man is a poet with a great rock 'n' roll band to set all his words into a modern sometimes viciously honest dance that you will certainly find a meaning in. Just remember, the Shadow knows. From: Roots Town Magazine (Holland and Belgium) Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Paul Jonker Allen Shadow did more than just sleep on making his first CD; indeed it took him four years. The reason may have been his switch from street poet/song writer to 'rock poet'. He worked many years as a songwriter for one of the small Nashville 'factories', but Trisha Yearwood was not really impressed by his dark lyrics. King Kong Serenade is a fascinating album on New York's dark side, and was recorded before the fatal day of September 11. Downtown is the album's rough kick-off depicting 42nd Street's steamy environment in a striking fashion. Allen Shadow works hard to keep out any false notes, and reminds almost everyone of the early Lou Reed. Sugar Street is yet another beautiful black song: "In the smoke and fish head morn, the gathering of ghetto boys, whores wail, peddlers call, crime sweats on tenement walls, horses die at their feet, cheap as ants on Sugar Street". You, Coney Island musically paints the decline of the Coney Island resort. Also the title song is just about perfect with King Kong used as a metaphor for the battling outsider. Allen Shadow's band includes the highly talented John Jackson (ex Bob Dylan guitarist who recently played a lot for Lucinda Williams), drummer Paul Griffith (John Prine), and Randy Leago (Janis Ian) on the keyboard. Everyone who loves Lou Reed and Nick Cave will definitely appreciate this album. From: NY Rock Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Bill Ribas Shadow, a poet, had gone to Nashville years back when the songwriting mill was an interesting alternative to the then current state of music. Now, on a disc that took four years to make, he paints a vivid and nostalgic portrait of NY as

seen from the street level. His poetical descriptions are a joy to read, as on "Crossroads of America," which begins, "Minnie Mouse gets grab-assed, by a white-whiskered alchy, in the leftover '50s light of the arcades of 42nd Street, jazz Cadillacs scream in octaves, generations wait at the cosmic light." His delivery is not unlike Lou Reed's, predominantly spoken rather than sung, the voice gravelly, but not despondent. He also has some talent backing him, like guitarist John Jackson (Bob Dylan, Lucinda Williams), and drummer Paul Griffith (John Prine), among others, so the musicianship is there as well. The disc smokes and burns like steam coming out of a manhole cover, gritty and authentic, and fans of New York and artists like Reed, Jim Carroll, etc. will find this a must-have addition to their music collection. From: Chronogram Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Liam Drauf New York city native Allen Shadow traveled a long way to record King Kong Serenade. Four years in the making, Serenade was recorded pre-9/11 in Nashville-where Shadow was employed as a commercial songwriter in Nashville for most of the 90s-and is a musical portrait of Shadow's hometown that contains an auguring darkness of events to come. The album's first track, "Downtown", is the discordant doppelganger to the tune Petula Clark made famous that seems quaintly naive now; Shadow's vision of New York is darker, grittier, and is played out in minor chords: "Platform cheek to cheek/the paper hides the morning geeks/signs read in shock speak/sunglassed to the knees/the drive for sex so sleek/it rushes 42nd Street." Shadow walks the same New York streets as Lou Reed before him, another bard of the underbelly of Gotham, creating verbal mosaics out of urban decay. (Shadow published two books of poetry in the 1980s.) Shadow is joined on Serenade by some heavy hitting music industry veterans: John Jackson (played with Bob Dylan and Lucinda Williams), drummer Paul Griffith (played with John Prine), and keyboard player Randy Leago (played with Janis Ian). Back-up vocal work was handled by Etta Britt, who's vocal on "You, Coney Island" is eerily reminiscent of EmmyLou Harris' backing on Desire for Bob Dylan. An off-beat opus, King Kong Serenade takes the rock album down the path of Nick Cave, Tom Waits, and Patti Smith, weaving stories over minimalist backing music at times propulsive, droning, and plaintive. Shadow has taken off toward the idiosyncratic edges, looking under the unfamiliar stones for a true rock story. Excerpts: From: Music-reviewer.com Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) Shadow is an extremely capable songwriter; his words speak, and his music rocks, with authority. Tracks like "Downtown," "Crossroads of America," "Hopper's Town," and "You, Coney Island" are as authentic as word pictures as many of Lou Reed's best works, and the arrangements have kind of a drugged

aggressiveness to them that is just about perfect. (King Kong Serenade) will probably endure as one of those discs that will be passed around and listened to for years. From: splendidezine.com Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) Shadow fills his descriptions with dark and dreamy, psychedelic-tinged images that recall songs like Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man", Eric Anderson's "Violets of Dawn" and Donovan's "Sunny Goodge Street". The quintessential example is "Sugar Street", in which the listener finds himself swirling weightlessly from great line to great line. Shadow narrates with the confidence of an old Hollywood detective who has grown sick of the scene, but still knows his city like the back of his right hand. His loose verse allows the listener to roam through his darkly intriguing creations, filling in the holes between his descriptive gaps. From: Billy Collins U.S. Poet Laureate Engaging! From: WAMC-FM Radio Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Seth Rogovoy "King Kong Serenade" really reminds me of early Lou Reed, Jim Carroll and Bruce Springsteen... From: Metroland Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Peter Hanson Enough gritty lyricism and clanging guitar parts to make Lou Reed proud...there's no stopping Allen Shadow... From: EmergentMusic.com Allen Shadow "King Kong Serenade" (Blue City) By Gary Robinson Powerful New York City Rock Poetry. BIO: The Allen Shadow Story With his debut release, "King Kong Serenade," critics are already raving about Allen Shadow, calling him "a true rock poet in the tradition of Nick Cave, Tom Waits, and Dylan". His gritty, literate New York City style has critics comparing him to early Lou Reed, Bruce Springsteen, Jim Carroll and even Walt Whitman. "King Kong Serenade" offers a noirish portrait of New York City, from its famed icons to its ill-fated ghosts, as it invokes the spirits of Kerouac, bebop jazz greats, painters, grifters, street hustlers and side-show personae. "Perhaps not since Lou Reed...have images of New York life, from the sidewalks to the subways to the squatter tenements, from Coney Island to the Bronx, been so aptly paired with the sound of crunching guitars, bass and drums," wrote Seth Rogovoy in the Berkshire Eagle. "Like Reed, Shadow has the poet's gift for imagery ('Platform cheek to cheek/The paper hides the morning geeks/Signs read in shock speak/Sunglassed to the knees')," said Rogovoy. "Charles Mingus haunts the proceedings, as do Allen Ginsberg, Thelonious Monk and Jack Kerouac, but Shadow is an original storyteller, painting vivid portraits of the romance and terror of life in the world's greatest city." "At a time when many are wondering about the future of New York City," wrote Terry Ross in a 5-star review in the Daily Freeman, "Shadow's work is a lovely repast, truly an abnormally poignant journey through yellow bejeweled images and the splendid squalor of one of the world's greatest microcosms." But where

has such an artist been all these years? The answer is simple: in development. Shadow (a.k.a. Allen Kovler) began his writing career as a poet. Two books of his poetry - "Harlem River Baby" and "A Heart in the Anteroom" - were published by Quick Books (Pueblo, Colo.) during the 1980s, and his work was included in many small and university press publications nationwide. Also during the 1980s, Shadow co-edited a literary magazine and directed a reading series in upstate New York that included the poets Robert Creeley, Robert Kelly and Gary Snyder. As a performance poet, Shadow toured college campuses in the 1980s with a staged version of "Harlem River Baby," which included the doo-wop group the Phantoms. The show played to rave reviews at the same time Shadow's writing was singled out by such literary publications as Library Journal, which called his imagery "startling." His music interests led him to a stint in commercial songwriting. He spent much of the 1990s as a songwriter in Nashville, writing for PolyGram, SONY, and Mel Tillis' music publishing company, among others. Despite working with such artists as Trisha Yearwood, Shadow, like many literary songwriters before him, ultimately decided Nashville's formulaic canon was too limiting. Consequently, he returned fully to his poetical voice, this time marrying it with music as he had always intended. During the four years it took to write and produce "King Kong Serenade," Shadow was encouraged by fellow poets, including Allen Ginsberg who had spent much of his career working with the convergence of poetry and music. Ironically, Shadow recorded his offbeat rock album "King Kong Serenade" in Nashville with a cadre of alternative-music veterans. Included were Bob Dylan and Lucinda Williams guitar alumnus John Jackson, John Prine drummer Paul Griffith, and Janis Ian keyboard player Randy Leago. Shadow received a 2001 New York State Council on the Arts grant to support his work as a rock poet. "King Kong Serenade" Album Description: "King Kong Serenade" offers a gritty, noirish portrait of New York City, from its famed icons to its ill-fated ghosts. The album's songs invoke spirits past of Times Square, the Beat writers, jazz greats, the Lower East Side, Coney Island, and the Bronx. "Like (Lou) Reed, (Allen) Shadow has the poet's gift for imagery ('Platform cheek to cheek/The paper hides the morning geeks/Signs read in shock speak/Sunglassed to the knees...'), said the Berkshire Eagle of "King Kong Serenade." "Charles Mingus haunts the proceedings, as do Allen Ginsberg, Thelonious Monk and Jack Kerouac, but Shadow is an original storyteller, painting vivid portraits of the romance and terror of life in the world's greatest city." The album works as a kind of post-modern novel of Gotham and the 20th century, as Shadow deconstructs the city's faces, places and myths, and rearranges them into a wild serio-comic mind movie. "I wanted to see the

city through time," says Shadow, who worked on the CD for four years. "The city has a thick family photo album. All we see when we stand on the corner of 46th and Broadway today is a sterile assortment of eye candy. It may say a lot about us at the moment, but you can't expect to know New York from that point of view." Meanwhile, the star of "KKS" is always the language, front and center. As a poet, Shadow has always been known for leaning on the language, and "KKS" is a feast of stunning, muscular imagery. Measured against today's dizzying backdrop of one-hit wonder groups, "KKS" is a daring artistic project, suitable to the tastes of hungry discerning listeners. Musically, the album is cutting edge. Shadow's band features Bob Dylan guitar alum John Jackson and John Prine drummer Paul Griffith. "King Kong Serenade" Song Descriptions: "Downtown": "Ghosts of Broadway loom" as the "the subway snakes the tenements" in this taut "film noir" tale of murder that reveals the city's lurid underbelly at every turn: "The roulette train squeels/the leopard lights feel/hour of the neon queen/night bows to kiss her ring/the beebop piper kneels to play/the 'King Kong Serenade.'" "Crossroads of America": Times Square is the backdrop in this paean to the city's lost grit and inspiration. The spirits of Kerouac, jazz and B-movies are invoked: "The ghosts of Kerouac and Monk/ waltz with the wrecker ball/ they dance the runaway dream/ for leave sailors and poet boys/ the masterbuilder's crane is chewing/ spitting out the pits of B-movie queens." "Empress of Night": City as siren: "she hums a song for boys and beasts." "Hopper's Town": "Garbo walks 5th sunstriped and blue" in this celebration of Edward Hopper, whose paintings capture the city's mystery best. "You, Coney Island": Freud, Thomas Edison and Topsy the Elephant inhabit this dreamscape tour de force that is also metaphor for the 20th century. "Fashion": "In the glass of Bloomingdales, ghost taxis flash," and so does the fate of you and I and all those who have dared to eclipse mortality in the city lights. "Freedomland": Bronx housewives boff seltzermen and cultures burst in the Bronx air as generations turn in this small novel of a song that include a reference to the infamous Happy Land Disco fire of 1990. "Sugar Street": "Crime sweats on tenement walls" in the old Five Points neighborhood in this raw drama of the dark side of immigration. "Poet in the City": A poetical acid trip evoking Federico Garcia Lorca's own view of the industrial revolution coming from his own trip to Metropolis in the 1930s. "King Kong Serenade": The "beast of Broadway" is idolized as Allen Ginsberg plays his harmonium. "King of the Moon": A son finds freedom from nightmarish Bronx rooms ("The Three Stooges melting on the TV to Tchaikovsky") and the governing hand of his father. The Story Behind "King Kong Serenade" "The beast in 'King Kong Serenade' really came out of the beast in me," says Allen

Shadow. "I was in Nashville stale on writing formula songs for the machine. So I returned to my voice as a poet, with a vengeance. The monster in me was awakened. So, in retrospect, it was no surprise that I subconsciously chose our beloved Kong as the symbol for my album adventure." A poet first and foremost, Shadow had come to Nashville to pursue a songwriting career, but it was always meant to be a stop along the way - the way to ultimately marrying his voice as a poet with music. After a decade in the song trade, Shadow had honed his skills as a tunesmith and was ready to take that next step - the convergence of the poet and songwriter. "It was kind of like the Jekyll and Hyde movie, where Spencer Tracy drinks his long sought after chemical concoction and goes mad," says Shadow. "I didn't know whether it was going to be a success or a colossal monstrosity, but I went at it full bore." What emerged was a raw, rich portrait of New York City, Shadow's hometown and the backdrop of most of his poetry. And with the help of his formidable band - which included Bob Dylan and Lucinda Williams guitar alumnus John Jackson, John Prine drummer Paul Griffith, and Janis Ian keyboard player Randy Leago - the beast had come to stunning reality.

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