

Mp3 Groovelily - Jungle & Sky/groovelily Sampler (back Issue Series)



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electric violin-driven smart pop, with a mix of contemplative and celebratory moods: Paula Cole meets Bruce Hornsby. 17 MP3 Songs FOLK: like Joni, POP: Quirky Details: "Jungle Sky," the first album to include the band name "GrooveLily," was originally released in the spring of 1996. It is re-released now (2004), as part of the GrooveLily "Back Issue Series," which currently also includes "Inhabit My Heart" (Valerie Vigoda's solo CD from 1994), "Brendan The Extenuating Circumstances" (Brendan Milburn's solo CD from 1998), and "Little Light" (GrooveLily, 2000). Remastered by Neale Eckstein at Fox Run Studios, the CD contains the entire 5-song EP "GrooveLily Sampler" as bonus tracks, plus a previously unreleased 1997 live track, as well as access to a special, exclusive section of the GrooveLily website, including new liner notes, previously unseen photographs, documents, and journal entries.

----- GrooveLily is the last type of group one expected to find in the rough-and-tumble Manhattan rock scene of the mid-'90s -- a world dominated by its grunge, industrial, punk, funk-rock and gothic music. Rejecting anger and aggression in favor of a softer and consistently melodic -- yet edgy -- pop/rock approach, lead singer/violinist Valerie Vigoda, keyboardist Brendan Milburn and drummer Max Langert (who left the group in late 1996) earned a small but seemingly loyal following. Full of enticing melodies and a strong harmonic punch, Jungle Sky sometimes brings to mind 10,000 Maniacs -- not because the bands sound anything alike, but because its approach so often sounds like amplified acoustic music. One of the things that makes GrooveLily distinctive is Vigoda's unorthodox use of the violin. But even without it, Vigoda's expressive singing and the trio's poignant, often introspective lyrics would have made the album a winner. The singer/violinist had been working as a solo artist when, in 1995, she met keyboardist/songwriter Brendan Milburn and became part

of the promising pop-rock trio GrooveLily (which has since acquired a small East Coast following). Just how strong a rapport Vigoda and Milburn have is evident on GrooveLily's impressive debut CD of 1996, *Jungle Sky*. Musically, Milburn seems to know how to bring out the best in Vigoda and encourage her to go that extra mile, --Alex Henderson, *All-Music Guide*, 1997

----- In direct contrast to the bulldozing meanderings of hopelessness that so many alterna-acts are trotting out these days, comes GrooveLily. A trio of folk-influenced pop artists, Valerie Vigoda, Brendan Milburn and Max Langert (with a little help from their friends) deliver an album of positive visions and mature observations of sadness that should excite fans of everything from James Taylor to Melissa Etheridge to *It's A Beautiful Day* (remember them?). The eleven tracks here are dandies, the highlights of which are: the touching monument to regret, "Too Late"; the drifter's lament, "Desert Roads"; a clever dissertation on the shortcomings of the heart, "Love Lies"; and the picturesque "Goodbye Virginia." From Vigoda's passionate violin work to the crafty harmonies on through to the band's engaging way with words, *jungle sky* is a decisive winner. Because it's a self-produced and distributed outing, it may take a little extra legwork to locate a copy of this. However, if you have to walk from New York to Buffalo, it'll be worth the trip...even if you take that walk in winter. Good, refreshing and sincere songs in a time when you can find flying saucers faster than good melodies.-- Billy Zachary, *Good Times Magazine*, 1996

----- Perhaps the best word to describe New York City-based GrooveLily is 'classy'. The group, headed by vocalist/violinist Valerie Vigoda and keyboardist Brendan Milburn -- accompanied by an assortment of drummers and other musical assistants -- plays a tasteful, yet emotionally charged, mixture of pop/jazz. Milburn says the band's music has been described as electric folk alternative pop, somewhat to the dismay of the members, who ideally would like to find one word that truly describes its eclectic product. The pairing of Milburn and Vigoda might seem odd, considering the musical paths each has chosen. 29-year-old Vigoda is an award-winning, classically-trained musician, the daughter of jazz pianist Bob Vigoda (who has worked with Sting, among others). In 1994 Vigoda, then a solo artist, released her "inhabit my heart" album -- a recording that was voted the number 1 album of 1994 by *Rhythm and News Magazine*. In contrast to Vigoda's classical training, Milburn, on the other hand, chose to play rock and roll and funk, playing primarily by ear as opposed to little black dots on paper. Milburn has paid his dues as a sideman for both Clarence Clemons

and Ben Harper. On stage, Vigoda is armed with a special violin, one designed to allow her to sing and play at the same time. She says the instrument is shaped like a flying-V guitar rather than a traditional violin, utilizing a guitar strap and chest support that allow her the freedom to handle both vocalizing and violin work simultaneously. GrooveLily released its "jungle sky" CD to rave reviews, including those which appeared in New York Newsday and The Washington Post -- the latter calling GrooveLily's material "smart, often passionate...radiating considerable warmth, intelligence and tunefulness." When asked about the name of the band, Vigoda says that it was a way to capture the "juxtaposition of our individual styles: the tight-knit rock rhythms of Brendan and the more flowing, lyrical quality of my music." The name, as they say, stuck. -- Lisa Fairbanks, Rhythm News Magazine, 1997

----- " helium-powered pop-rock with enough ingenuity to take thrilling flight " -- Daniel Gewertz, The Boston Herald, 12/6/96

----- "*****" -- The Music Paper, 11/96

----- "an alternative to alternative" -- New York Newsday, 10/13/96 ----- "Vigoda is one of the best singers I've heard in a long time" -- Ithaca Journal, 9/19/96

----- "'jungle sky' is a fine first outing, showcasing the considerable talents of each band member" -- Time Off, 8/30/96

----- "When you hear that violin-bedecked pop trio GrooveLily is coming to your town, don't think string-band hoedown. Think Steely-Dan-tight, worthy arrangements, big beautiful voices, tones and technique. A stunning surprise! Then go..." -- Heather Dunbar, WSKG , Binghamton, NY, 1996

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