

Mp3 Lauren Hoffman - Choreography



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melancholy pop, for the bruised of heart and deep in thought; "moody and gorgeous...an artist reaching an impressive musical maturity." - john schacht, allmusic.com 11 MP3 Songs POP: Delicate, ROCK: Modern Rock Details: "i remember when john lennon was shot: i was three years old and it was a momentous occasion in our household - a house where music was religion and bob marley, dylan, and the beatles were gods. we lived a secluded country hippie lifestyle with no tv, and music was my main link to a world beyond our boxwood hedge; i remember listening to my parents records, gazing at the pictures on the enormous colorful sleeves... "the names of friends from my childhood fade - after my parents divorce we moved around so much it was hard to keep track of people - but the records i listened to remain: the rolling stones' some girls, sting's dream of the blue turtles, prince's purple rain, bob dylan's infidels, madonna's material girl, bruce springsteen's born in the usa "i tried playing a lot of different instruments but nothing stuck until i was 13 and got my dad to teach me basic guitar chords. by then he had discovered a local bartender named dave matthews and was helping him hone his songwriting and put together a band. i was often hanging out while they worked on songs: dave playing a new 'jam' with half-formed lyrics for my dad, my dad giving feedback and suggesting changes. soon, i started writing my own songs. "as a teenager i felt completely fucked-up: angry, different, depressed, outraged by the world, by societal norms and expectations; i was self-destructive and i under-achieved... but, alone in my room, i taught myself the guitar and wrote songs. it was something that seemed like it mattered. it was a release, it was a place of honesty. but i knew enough about the music business from my dad to be wary of it and i wasn't planning to pursue life as a performer - in fact i hoped to be involved, like him, behind the scenes. "in my senior year of high school the dave matthews band was gaining success and i was interning in their merchandise/management office. one night i caught a ride up to catch dave playing a solo set (i

always liked him better solo than with the band) at a place called the birchmere outside of DC. the opening act was a solo singer/songwriter, playing a telecaster guitar and singing like the devil and god were fighting a duel in his belly. his name was jeff buckley and he was on tour supporting his first release, the 'live at sin-e' EP. we met backstage and spent almost all of dave's set smoking a joint in the dressing room and talking. he talked about music and playing and singing and writing with an innocence and passion that i, ten years his junior, was too jaded to relate to... but it inspired me. he encouraged me not to sit on the sidelines, to sing if that was what my heart told me to do, to write from my gut and put myself out there no matter how difficult or scary it would turn out to be. "that night changed my life. "when jeff died four years later, it was one month before my debut record was to come out on virgin records. the advance copy i had mailed to him was still in transit on the day he waded into a river in memphis and never came out. i don't think i've fully recovered - i don't know if i ever will. "but i am still inspired. perhaps now more than ever. "you see, over the years, since that time, i've been conflicted... i had a major-label deal, then got myself out of it. i went to back to college and studied dance and fell in love and lived like a normal person for awhile. i lost my inspiration, found it, lost it, and found it again many times. i wanted a career in music, then changed my mind, then changed it back. maybe i was being a bit of a brat, but all of it has led to where i am today, finally firm in my chosen path, seeking the humility and selflessness that allows for the transcendent, honing my skills so i may be a better conduit for the muse, remembering all of that innocent passion i found in jeff's voice, and trying, with every note and every song, to honor that memory." -- Lauren Hoffman _____ "Sometimes an artist just needs to step back and take stock. Lauren Hoffman hasn't been heard from on record in seven years, and it's been nearly a decade since her sparkling debut, Megiddo, languished in Virgin Records purgatory, leading Hoffman to pull the plug on her major-label deal. All of which makes Choreography an all the more pleasant surprise. Returning to the dark, swirling atmospherics of her debut, the moody and gorgeous Choreography ups the ante with layers of textured production, sampling a potpourri of styles and handling them all with equal aplomb. "The sum of her influences and much more, Hoffman apprenticed in fellow Virginian Shannon Worrell's underappreciated September 67 project (which Hoffman briefly joined), worked with Cracker's David Lowery (who produced her first EP and plays bass on Choreography's "Solipsist"), and took inspiration from the late Jeff Buckley, whose gut-wrenching honesty had a profound effect on her. Based on songwriting chops alone, Choreography merits favorable

comparison with Aimee Mann and Fiona Apple, but it also calls to mind the overlooked chanteuse Eleni Mandell. "Instead, Hoffman has to go to France to get a record deal. The slinky disc-opener, "Broken," should by all rights be a huge radio hit. On top of a sensuous, vaguely sinister beat, keyboard washes, synth bleats, and atmospheric guitar lines from Timo Ellis (Cibo Matto), Hoffman's opening couplet -- "You're a little bit damaged/I'm a sucker for that" -- carries the freighted promise of intimate confession, which the rest of the record delivers over and over. "As the Stars" is all sultry come-on and languid, by-the-fire lovers' fare wrapped in a soulful, baritone guitar-driven country shuffle with soaring choruses. Both songs recall some of the moody aura of Trampoline-era Joe Henry. "Another Song About the Darkness" begins in quiet, forlorn resignation until the pump organ played by Alan Weatherhead (Sparklehorse) eventually pushes the song into an up-tempo crescendo. "Ghost You Know" is stately Mann, strings and piano elevating the chorus and bridge to elegiac heights, and "Out of the Sky, into the Sea" is a waltz with a calliope feel built on the back of Chris Lancaster's sublime cello work. "Only slightly less effective are the two more straightforward rockers that feature a retro-'80s feel, "White Sheets" and "Hiding in Plain Sight." Both are executed well, but for all their nervous energy and angst, they don't quite scale the emotional heights of Choreography's more textured fare. "But that's just splitting critical hairs. John D'earth's lonely flgelhorn frames disc-ender "Joshua," where Hoffman lists the many things that love is not and in the process of elimination suggests what true love's really all about. Choreography may concern itself with the hard lessons learned from the dance of love, but it's also about an artist reaching an impressive musical maturity." From AllMusic.com, by John Schacht

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