

Charlotte Gainsbourg – IRM (2009)

Written by bluelover

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01. *Master's Hand* [02:49] 02. *IRM* [02:35] [play](#) 03. *Le Chat du Café des Artistes* [04:03] 04. *In The End* [02:00] 05. *Heaven Can Wait* [02:40] 06. *Me And Jane Doe* [03:20] 07. *Vanities* [03:38] 08. *Time Of The Assassins* [02:45] 09. *Trick Pony* [02:52] 10. *Greenwich Mean Time* [02:25] [play](#) 11. *Dandelion* [03:17] 12. *Voyage* [05:16] 13. *La Collectionneuse* [02:22] 14. *Looking Glass Blues* [02:22]

January 26th, 2010 marks the Because Music / Elektra release of Charlotte Gainsbourg's third studio album titled IRM. The title is derived from M.R.I, which reflects the medical procedure Charlotte had to go through after suffering a head injury in a water skiing accident in 2007. The album is Charlotte's most personal to date, and is produced by acclaimed Grammy nominated artist/multi-instrumentalist Beck.

What started as a brief recording session between Charlotte Gainsbourg and Beck ended up to be the body of work that is IRM. Over the course of a year and a half of writing and recording together, Beck's role grew to encompass all aspects of the creative process. He worked seamlessly with Charlotte co writing the lyrics and produced and mixed the recording. (This is the first time he has ever been so involved in another artist's work.)

The title track from IRM was posted online as a free download via her official website on October 9th, and the official album trailer was featured on Pitchfork.com the same day. The official first single off the album is "Heaven Can Wait" featuring Beck. A video featuring the two stars premiered on AOL Music on November 18th.

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Sonically, the album is a new direction for Charlotte Gainsbourg and her first in nearly four years. Beck's iconic and spacey production blends flawlessly with Charlotte's unique vocals and delivery. The release will be accompanied by a US promo tour in early 2010. Gainsbourg also recently graced the pages of Rolling Stone, Esquire, Vanity Fair, Nylon Magazine, Village Voice (cover), New York Times, Blackbook, Harper's Bazaar and more. --- Editorial Reviews

January 18, 2010 - Typically, when actors make the transition to music, the results can range from mixed to regrettable. But for Charlotte Gainsbourg, the daughter of French pop artist Serge Gainsbourg and English actress Jane Birkin, there's an obvious musical pedigree. And while that almost certainly brings with it unreasonably high expectations, Gainsbourg has successfully plotted her own path as both an actress — working with directors Todd Haynes, Michel Gondry and Lars von Trier — and a singer-songwriter. For one thing, Gainsbourg knows how to attract top-shelf collaborators who bring out her best side.

On her 2006 album 5:55, Gainsbourg surrounded herself with a remarkable lineup: music by Air, lyrics by Pulp's Jarvis Cocker and The Divine Comedy's Neil Hannon, and production by Nigel Godrich. Gainsbourg's new follow-up, IRM, continues in that spirit, this time turning to Beck, who produced and co-wrote the album. You can hear IRM in its entirety here, a week before its release on Jan. 26.

Sensing that they shared a common aesthetic, Gainsbourg enlisted Beck for nearly every aspect of the creative process: Beck wrote all the music, co-wrote the lyrics and produced and mixed the recording. He also brought in many players from his regular cast — Joey Waronker and James Gadson on drums, Brian LeBarton on keyboards — as well as his own father, David Campbell, who composed string arrangements.

For Gainsbourg, IRM is dramatic and personal. It's inspired, in part, by her health scare in 2007, in which she suffered a brain hemorrhage following a water-skiing accident; she required frequent hospital trips for MRI scans — or "IRM" in French. She later incorporated the buzzing electronic noise and rhythm of the scanner into the album's title track. In it, Gainsbourg's words — "Hold still and press the button / Looking through a glass onion / Following the X-ray eye / From the cortex to medulla" — marry clinical jargon with feelings of helplessness and claustrophobia.

As for Beck, his musical fingerprints can be heard all over the album's diverse instrumentation. From the understated blues of "Dandelion" and the fuzzed-out guitar of "Trick Pony" to the punch-drunk parlor piano in "Heaven Can Wait," Beck has helped compose a sonic and spiritual companion to his 2003 album *Sea Change*.

Naturally, Serge Gainsbourg's cinematic French pop is also a reference point: "Le Chat Du Café Des Artistes" re-creates the orchestral flourishes, abrupt bursts of guitar and funky bass grooves of his 1971 masterpiece *Histoire de Melody Nelson*. This is familiar territory for Beck, who aped many of the same elements on the *Sea Change* song "Paper Tiger." At times, even Charlotte Gainsbourg's alluring whisper is so muted, it hearkens back her father's spoken-word vocals. And then there's "La Collectionneuse," with its sleek, slow-building electronic minimalism.

While there might not be many rocking show-stoppers that forcefully grab attention, the joy in *IRM* comes in the lyrical subtlety and layered details that unspool upon each listen. For fans, Gainsbourg and Beck's partnership is a dream match-up of strong musical personalities. ---
Michael Katzif, npr.org

Na swoim trzecim albumie Charlotte Gainsbourg udowadnia, że nagrywanie płyt nie jest dla niej jedynie kaprysem i odskocznią od kariery filmowej. "IRM" to jeden z najlepszych albumów upływającego roku.

Już poprzedni album francuskiej aktorki i wokalistki narobił sporo zamieszania. "5:55" nagrany m.in. przy współpracy duetu Air, Jarvisa Cockera i Nigela Godricha (producent Radiohead), wprawił zachwyty krytyków po obu stronach Atlantyku. Do pracy nad "IRM" 38-letnia wokalistka tym razem zaprosiła Becka Hansena, co okazało się strzałem w dziesiątkę, jako że amerykański muzyk i producent jest obecnie w szczytowej formie, co można było usłyszeć choćby na płycie "Modern Guilt" nagranej w zeszłym roku wspólnie z Dangermousem. Beck wsparł Gainsbourg jako producent, współautor tekstów i wokalista.

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Muzyk zajął się nawet zmiksowaniem całego materiału. Nie dziwi więc "beckowski" klimat sączący się z wszystkich porów "IRM", pod postacią rozklekotanych gitar i eklektycznych wstawek – od odgłosów mew po przedziwne industrialne sample (tytułowy "IRM" był inspirowany dźwiękami wydawanymi przez urządzenie do rezonansu magnetycznego, z którego wokalistka często korzystała po poważnym wypadku podczas jazdy na nartach wodnych dwa lata temu). Nie rzadko słychać tu też drapieżne, przesterowane wokale i charakterystyczną nonszalancką manierę, jaką Gainsbourg przejęła od swojego kolegi. W "Looking Glass Blues" miejsce melorecytującej Charlotte spokojnie mógłby zająć Beck, choć akurat tu, jej delikatny głos ciekawie kontrastuje z mocarnymi, ekstremalnie skompresowanymi bębnami stylizowanymi na brzmienie perkusji Johna Bonhama z Led Zeppelin. --- Marcin Staniszewski, students.pl

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