

Bridget St. John - BBC Radio 1968-1976 (2010)

Written by bluelover

Sunday, 05 March 2017 16:08 -

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DISC 1 01. *I Don't Know If I Can Take It* 02. *Some Kind Of Beautiful* 03. *Jumblequeen* 04. *Fly High* 05. *Sparrowpit* 06. *Want To Be With You* 07. *Curious And Woolly* 08. *Head And Heart* 09. *Long Long Time* 10. *Come Up And See Me Sometime* 11. *Catch A Falling Star* 12. *Love Lie Easy* 13. *The River* 14. *Song To Keep You Company* 15. *Night In The City* 16. *Lazarus* 17. *Curl Your Toes* 18. *Thank You For...* DISC 2: 01. *Sparrowpit* 02. *Nancy Alice* 03. *Plain And Pearl* 04. *Make Me Whole* 05. *She Used To Play Harmonium* 06. *Crazy, Have You Eton* 07. *Peel 'Sleeping' anecdote* 08. *Bumper To Bumper* 09. *Leaves Of Lime* 10. *City Crazy* 11. *The Pebble And The Man* 12. *Back To Stay* 13. *Song For The Laird Of Connaught Hall, Pt.2* 14. *Jolie Madame - Duet with Kevin Ayers* 15. *The Spider And The Fly - Duet with Kevin Ayers* 16. *The Oyster And The Flying Fish - Duet with Kevin* 17. *To Be Without A Hitch* 18. *Ask Me No Questions* 19. *Many Happy Returns* 20. *Hello Again (Of Course)* 21. *Rochefort* 22. *Lizard Long Tongue Boy* 23. *The Present Song / Pig & Peel*
Bridget St. John – guitar, vocals

Fans of singer, songwriter, and Brit-folk chanteuse Bridget St. John will no doubt be delighted by this double-disc, 41-cut selection of her BBC recordings with John Peel and other DJs from the late '60s through the mid-'70s. Peel was hosting Top Gear at this time, and took over the network's Night Ride program from producer John Muir in 1968. St. John appeared on Night Ride first and that initial off-air rehearsal performance is here, near the end of disc two at her insistence, though its audio quality is not as high as most on this handsome package. The songs she chose for this performance are quite telling: "To Be Without a Hitch," "Ask Me No Questions," "Rochefort," and "Lizard Long Tongue Boy," to mention a few. This set is not arranged chronologically, which may piss off a few hardcore collectors and bibliophiles, but that's what remote controls and multi-disc changers are for. It is arranged aesthetically -- the material on disc one is nearly flawlessly reproduced, while disc two has some rougher live spots (that do not take away from the performances). The package, with copious liner notes and an interview with St. John, has been wonderfully compiled and sequenced by Hux with the full cooperation of the artist and was beautifully remastered by Ron Geesin, who appears as a sideman on many of these sessions, as do Mike Oldfield, Bernie Marsden, and David Bedford.

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St. John was one of the first artists signed to Peel's Dandelion Records imprint, and some of the tunes she recorded on her five albums were previewed either in these BBC sessions for Night Ride, Top Gear, or the terrific Radio 1 in Concert series. St. John's performances of her own songs are complemented richly by covers of Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Lazarus," Joni Mitchell's "Night in the City," and John Martyn's "The River." Kevin Ayers duets with St. John on three tunes from a Radio 1 in Concert performance in 1971: "Jolie Madame," "The Spider and the Fly," and the co-written "Oyster and the Flying Fish." A collection like this is pretty much for fans only; part of that is the appeal of her voice, which is limited in range in the same way Nick Drake's was. But there was a reason she was a favorite of Peel's: she was a talented -- if shy songwriter -- who delivered her material with an unintended aura of mystery, ambiguity, and authority that is uncharacteristic for the era, though it has been oft-imitated since. There are other good compilations available for novices culled from her five albums, but for those dedicated fans, this is the holy grail. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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