

Tori Amos - Abnormally Attracted To Sin (2009)

Wpisany przez bluelover

Wtorek, 13 Październik 2009 22:00 - Zmieniony Poniedziałek, 28 Sierpień 2017 13:28

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01 - Give 02 - Welcome To England 03 - Strong Black Vine 04 - Flavor 05 - Not Dying Today 06 - Maybe California 07 - Curtain Call 08 - Fire To Your Plain 09 - Police Me 10 - That Guy 11 - Abnormally Attracted To Sin 12 - 500 Miles 13 - Mary Jane 14 - Starling 15 - Fast Horse 16 - Ophelia 17 - Lady In Blue Arranged By [Strings], Conductor – John Philip Shenale Bass – Jon Evans Drums, Loops, Percussion – Matt Chamberlain Guitar – Mac Aladdin Piano [Bösendorfer], Vocals, Synthesizer, Organ, Electric Piano [Rhodes] – Tori Amos + Cello – Caroline Dale, Rosemary Banks Mandolin – Mac Aladdin Viola – Holly Butler, James Hogg Violin – Ed Bale, Fiona McNaught, Kate Robinson, Matthew Elston

After the high conceptualism that lorded over 2005's *The Beekeeper* and 2007's *American Doll Posse*, singer and songwriter Tori Amos has decided to return to the relatively simple songs-as-songs approach on *Abnormally Attracted to Sin*. Those recordings, fine though they may have been, stretched the artist's reputation and the patience of her fans to the breaking point; based on her record sales, she whittled them down to simply the Tori cult (not a derogatory term, since many of her fans are proud to refer to themselves that way). The scope of this set in comparison with the previous two offerings seems more like a retrenchment than anything else. Not that there's anything at all wrong with that. There are songs on *Abnormally Attracted to Sin* that are as strong as anything she's written. Certainly the opener "Give," with its trip-hop rhythmic landscape and shifting backing vocals, slippery synth bass, and acoustic piano is beautifully constructed with a melody line that glides along a minor-key slant with a Middle Eastern tinge, and its lyric is both poignant and provocative. But then there is the single, "Welcome to England," whose 4/4 loop, drifting piano, and blend of guitars (electric and acoustic), strings, and ambient sounds is rudimentary Amos at best, and boring at worst. The refrain creates a bit of a hook, at least enough to catch the ear, but that's all. "Strong Black Vine," with its echoes of Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir" in the intro, tosses Amos back into her Jerry Lee Lewis dilemma: she loves and hates religious faith, and is both ensnared by it and saved by it. It's a rocker as far as her songs go, and works beautifully. "Maybe California" is a simple, straightforward modern pop ballad. It's beautifully composed and delivered. The track listing goes on, and on, and on, and on. And if there is a problem with *Abnormally Attracted to Sin*, this is it: it's 73 minutes long. At the dawn of the CD era, it made sense on some level to be this

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"generous" with listeners. But for any artist to sustain the kind of consistency necessary to keep a listener's attention for this length of time is extraordinary. By the album's second half, one has to play and replay certain tracks because they seem to go by in a blur. And to be honest, this set would have fared better for some real pruning. Whereas cuts like "Fire to Your Plain," with its country overtones and in-the-gut melody fare quite well here, another country-ish experiment, "Not Dyin' Today," could have been deleted because it feels like a tossed off idea more than a fully realized one. The title track is an eerie abstract exercise in ambience and atmospherics and its fragmented (and provocative) lyric is the perfect strategy to anchor it without losing its dreaminess. "500 Miles" (not the Proclaimers song) has a beautiful lyric, but musically it feels lifeless and lazy. The faux cabaret of "That Guy" feels like it updates Brecht and Weill in the 21st century, just as the jazzy intimacy of "Mary Jane" does the Parisian Saravah jazz scene of the late 50s and early '60s. What it all boils down to is, well, boiling it down. Amos doesn't record as much as most artists, and it must be tempting to give fans everything she can, but in this case, it's hurt her a bit. Still there, are many tracks here worth adding to one's Amos shelf. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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