

Silhouette Album Reviews

An Inspired New Beautifully Mad Album

They may be known as *Beautifully Mad*, but there is plenty of sanity and lots to like on the new album from Tony King and Nina Vox

Silhouette features a selection of songs that flaunt the considerable musical, vocal and song writing talents of two of Australia's most respected and accomplished performers.

It's always refreshing when a handful of gifted musos get together with a genuine creative mission in mind - the effect can be cutting-edge and exceptional.

This varied compilation of original songs is one such magnum opus.

Yet it is nigh impossible to put a genre label on the album, simply because these guys can pretty much play and sing anything – and do.

A lyrical and melodic fusion of folk, jazz, blues and ballads, it's obvious that the King, Vox and their session pals had a ball pushing their abilities and laying it all down.

Silhouette is an instrumental and vocal adventure, with neither artist holding back as they test the limits of voice range and tone, melody, improvisation, composition and lyrics.

There is mesmerising pathos in the tracks *The Red, White and Blue* and *Dust if You Must*, raw blues soul in *Silhouette*, jazzy irony in *Scratch*, emotive balladry in *Just Stay*, *Frida* and *As the Earth Would Miss the Sun*, and giggles galore in *We're Here Today to Bury Harry* and *Beam Me Up*.

Throughout we get superb guitar licks and solos from King, a fellow well know around the traps as one of Australia's acoustic and electric masters. He's also in great voice on a number of songs.

Meanwhile Vox pulls out all stops with lead vocals and backing: confident and playful, her mellifluous voice spellbinding and playfully agile.

Few singers have the ability to move so seamlessly and convincingly between the blues, jazz, folk and rock genres as this charming chanteuse.

The album also features a long list of fine session musicians on their instruments of choice, and the sum effect is serious Wow!

Peter Rigby – thestarfish.com.au

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE BEAUTIFULLY MAD TO WORK HERE, BUT IT HELPS

Posted on 9th November 2017

The best music connects with you at a subconscious level. You can analyse, deconstruct and debate the merits of it till the cows come home but real genius is already talking to you on an altogether more subtle level. In fact not just talking, the best music will have knocked on the door of your subconscious holding a bunch of flowers, wined and dined it and will be curled up on the sofa with it before your conscious half has even managed to get out of bed.

And so it is with *Silhouette*, the titular offering from Beautifully Mad's latest album and the real genius is that you have been listening to this band all of your life, you just may not have realised it. You have heard them in the lyricism of Leonard Cohen, the drunken grooves of Tom Waits, the sass of a whole range of blues divas and the virtuosity of blues informed rock guitarists. It is timeless and inevitable but still brilliantly original and totally necessary. - <http://www.anrfactory.com>

Silhouette

Beautifully Mad (Nina Vox & Tony King)

Moonlight Cactus Studios, Australia

4 out of 5 stars

This, Beautifully Mad's Swan Song CD, is an eclectic mix of musical genres (from soft piano and guitar pickings to heavy guitar riffs to swing jazz). On first pass the songs may feel unrelated, but dive in deeper and you'll hear a motif of sweet melancholy and deep contemplation through each track.

With each song unique in its exposition, it is a rich tapestry of the inner workings of both King and Vox's *raison d'être* - from the storytelling/honouring of special people who have made their mark on the world (*Frida, Malala*) to the ironic (*We're Here Today to Bury Harry and Beam Me Up*), to the poignant *Just Stay, Silhouette, Dust if you Must* and *The Red, White and Blue* (another 'Best Lyrics' award in the making). The bookends of *Fetch Me My Comb* sung by King and the reprise by 'Friends of Beautifully Mad' round out the album.

Vox's vocals grow more mellifluous with each album (*As the Earth Would Miss the Sun, Scratch*), while King's mastery on guitar and bass is ever present. The

duo has harnessed the talents of musicians of the highest order, including the immensely gifted Bill Risby on piano; 'Master Drummers' Gordon Rytmeister and Hamish Stuart; Wendy Matthews superb keyboard player Brendan St Ledger on Hammond organ; Phil Bywater - one of the finest saxophonists in Australia, talented bassists Natalie Morrison and Jonathan Zwartz, and backing vocalists who are frontline performers in their own right Dan Scollay and Maggie McKinney. The greatest instrumental coup was incorporating Pravin and Shadaj Godkhindi on Bansuri flutes to add depth and mood to the opening track *Malala*.

All in all, a thought-provoking, heartwarming mix of poetic narratives about the world at large (King's forte).

Favourite tracks: *Malala*, with its haunting blend of deep story and uplifting flutes; *Dust if you Must* - a gentle song that explores the importance of life values; *The Red White and Blue* - a song that rightly places the trauma of war front and centre, and *We're Here Today to Bury Harry*, with its tongue in cheek dig at the insularity that social media brings.

Shanna Provost – Freelance Journalist.