



Balroynigress *Shampoo & Champagne*


[Kning Disk; 2007]

By JULIE



STYLES: corny turned affecting

OTHERS: good luck!

The only thing resembling 'proper' on *Shampoo & Champagne* is an acoustic guitar. Essentially, it's a folk-pop album with quasi-chamber aspirations, but instead of strings and reeds, we get flatulent synths, melodica, and inside-out samples. The party responsible for the subversive palette is Sweden's Erik Jeor, and Balroynigress is his bastardized solo project. Although Bill van Cutten (which is a totally rad anagramized pseudonym for Vincent Bullat) provides lyrics and some instrumentation along the fringes of a few of the songs, and Elvire Soyez adds vocals on three tracks, everything else is Jeor. With good reason, too. In a couple years, the man could be skirting unqualified genius.  

"Postlove" opens things up with, far and away, the most straight-ahead track on the album. Van Cutten backs Jeor singing his lyrics over vaguely Spanish-sounding guitar (which is fitting due to lyrics concerning Andalusia) and an unidentifiable scree. "Go Go Go" is simply "*I got to go to the riverstreet*" repeated verbatim with the ever-present guitar, stumbling synth lines, and the highest-pitched, wordless vocal I've ever heard from a man. "The Landlords Love-Affair" is the album's real stunner. It has the same 'drunken orchestra playing a couple rooms over' vibe found in My Bloody Valentine's transitional "Touched," but "Love-Affair" is entirely full-fledged. Soyez takes lead vocals on the track, while Jeor sounds scared of backing her; his voice is very, very tentative when there at all. Bristly sampled horns and a shaker-heavy, tribal-y beat are separated by gentler passages of guitar and tambourine.

"As Silent As the Trees" is practically G-funk at points, with its oscillating synth and slow groove that can never quite find itself; at other points, it lapses into quasi-gospel. "Twenty Neon Lighted Feet Underground" is the dirge; deep seesawing synths over barely-there guitar juxtaposed with light choruses completed by warbling, wordless vocals, again, as high-pitched as you could wish for. The last bit finds Jeor singing sans accompaniment other than a brief, spare guitar. "Shampoo & Champagne" couples some of the album's weaker verse instrumentation with its strongest chorus counterpart. Laden with synth strings, "Morphine & Cookies" has the album's most defined beat, and lyrics like "*My neighbor had cancer! He knew he won't escape it! But his ironic smile was kind of funny*" exemplify the kind of detached creepiness that permeates throughout the album.

Jeor's voice will make or break *Shampoo & Champagne*. It's the biggest hurdle. Slurred, accented, admittedly kind of goofy; it's so far from what is typically viewed as a 'good voice' that it's fascinating and arguably the album's strongest point. It will surely drive some people insane. The lyrics often read like a poorly translated website. Conjugations are butchered, syntax is slightly off, and words are subtly mispronounced. "The Landlords Love-Affair" opens with "*Soon I'm gonna lost my job*"; the "j" pronounced soft like a "y." Images are often of travel and busted cities and are decidedly creepy. ("*Our cloudy veins are chewing! A kindly dinner! That turns to slaughter*", anyone?) The melancholic, dreamy feel of the album's barely-off instrumentation is hugely complimented by the fragmented words and vocals. Jeor's got a concise and disorienting album, and it's entirely his own.

01. Postlove
02. Go Go Go
03. Antibiotic Popmusic
04. The Landlords Love-Affair
05. I Like the Time
06. As Silent As the Trees
07. Twenty Neon Lighted Feet Underground
08. Shampoo & Champagne
09. Morphine & Cookies
10. The Landlords Love-Affair (Part Two)