

Discussions -- Jay Dunner

E-mail: fullmoonnotes@verizon.net

On the Web: www.ouceuponafullmoonnight.com



QUOTE OF NOTE: “If you followed the music, success and fame followed. I let the artist be who they are. When they [had] an idea, I listened [and] ... trusted artists and people to do the right thing. I was rarely disappointed.” (Jac Holzman, original owner of Elektra Records)

CARLY SIMON, THESE ARE THE GOOD OLD DAYS: The Carly Simon & Jac Holzman Story (Elektra)

Elektra owner Jac Holzman was the launchpad for Carly Simon’s solo career, having signed her to Elektra Records after both Columbia and Atlantic rejected her demo cassettes (much to their regret, I’d guess). Holzman, who’d already overseen releases by such cultural icons as The Doors, Judy Collins, The Stooges, Phil Ochs, Love, Tim Buckley, and The MC5, put his trust in the artists themselves. From the haunting “That’s the Way I Always Heard It Should Be,” to the sprightly (and, later, catsup-smacked) “Anticipation,” to the mega-hit (and G.O.A.T. song, according to Taylor Swift) “You’re So Vain,” Holzman’s hand was on the tiller, helping navigate Simon from her folky duos with sister Lucy toward public acclaim that nobody did it better than she. He collaborated closely with her through first four albums, until, after Hotcakes’ release, he sold his interest in Elektra, leaving a devastated Carly to David Geffen’s merge of Elektra with his own label Asylum, which put Simon in more direct competition with Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan; Carly was never again as nurtured an artist as she was with Holzman. This latest compilation, pulled and remixed from Simon’s first three albums – Carly Simon, Anticipation, and No Secrets – includes one previously unissued demo, “Alone,” and a number of long-forgotten gems, such as her stately cover of Buzzy Linhart’s “The Love’s Still Growing,” the melodically exotic “Our First Day Together,” and her come-hither heathering of Kris Kristofferson’s “I’ve Got to Have You.” The remastering is subtle, mainly just evening out volume differences among all tracks. Providing a vivid recollection of Simon and Holzman’s early ‘70s creative magic, the 16-page liner notes give the backgrounds behind this 20-song set, an engaging outline of the legend in her own time, as she quickly became ours. *****

THE CLIENTELE, I AM NOT THERE ANYMORE (Merge)

During the six years since the release of Music for the Age of Miracles, Alasdair MacLean and bandmates have branched beyond their trademark melancholy, autumnal folk-pop, adding computerized sound samples, avant-garde string explorations, spoken-word interludes, and several gorgeous, sparsely populated piano interludes, all of which give the presciently titled I Am Not There Anymore a cinematic quality, like listening to a movie. Of the album’s 19 tracks, two-thirds are actual songs; the remainder serve as scene transitions. With a driving cello riff right out of ELO-land, “Fables of the Silverlink” sets the movie mood, its mini-suite of varied verses and melodies serving as an overture. Subsequent memorable moments are the October fog of “Lady Grey,” the ephemeral “Claire’s Not Real,” the reflective “Stems of Anise,” and the seductive “Chalk Flowers.” Throughout, amidst the strings, horns, acoustic guitars, organ, Mellotron, and occasional bouzouki, MacLean’s vocal alternates between a burnished, Crash-Test-Dummies lumber and a plaintive Nick-Drake yearn. This is an album to bask in, one to be heard in its entirety, a days-of-future-passed masterpiece of British resignation, reminiscence, and resilience. *****

***** Outstanding. **** Excellent. *** Good. ** Meh. * Ecch!