

Reviews



Instrumentation, from snare to strings, inspires praise for 'Logic' and 'Love'

"Animal Logic II"
Animal Logic
I.R.S. Records

Logically speaking, the formula for success in the pop rock world is "Keep it simple." Make it easy for people to take. A couple of good licks and a hook or two is all a band needs to find mass appeal.

So what kind of logic is it when you take possibly the world's greatest drummer, Stewart Copeland, and possibly the most talented bassist that can be found, Stanley Clarke, and form a group that breaks the age-old mold? It's Animal Logic, of course.

Animal Logic, which is in its third year of existence, has just released its second album, inconspicuously titled "Animal Logic II." The album, which features the song-writing of lead singer Deborah Holland, is an improvement on the band's somewhat boring 1989 debut "Animal Logic."

"Animal Logic II" accomplishes what "Animal Logic" failed to do — define one possible new direction for pop music. It certainly has an innovative feel to it. Perhaps it's a "progressive" movement for the 1990s — the term first used in the early 1970s to describe the growing trend of complex arrangements and top-notch musicianship.

That is definitely the approach of this band. Holland's songs utilize the excellent musicians at her disposal. Clarke's bass playing is superb as always, and his unusual rhythms and style stand out, challenging the listener.

Copeland's drumming is better than ever. He can be heard playing classic

Police grooves on "Through A Window" and "I Won't Be Sleeping Anymore." All of the tracks bear his trademark whip-crack snare and high-hat wizardry. It's interesting to hear him tackle the almost hip-hop sound of the single "Rose Colored Glasses," in which he sounds as tight and precise as a drum machine. However, his human touch makes the song sound real, keeping it from washing away into the electronic drone of so many modern pop tunes.

The songs of "Animal Logic II" have some very appealing pop hooks while still managing to stick to the progressive feel. Among the best are "Rose Colored Glasses" and "Another Place," on which Jackson Browne adds some excellent backing vocals.

Unfortunately, Holland's lyrics are limited mostly to relationships and the failure thereof. None of her observations are terribly insightful or interesting, but they serve their purpose well enough. Besides, her beautiful lead vocals make up for the lack of genius in her verses.

As with all music that tends to steer clear of easy categorization, "Animal Logic II" probably will get little radio airplay and have to rely on VH1 for exposure.

However, most artists that steer clear of categories do so knowingly. They realize that lack of commercial success is a small price to pay for the satisfaction of creating something of enduring quality. Such is the case with this album.

—Carter Van Pelt

"Love"
Heidi Berry
4AD

Once in a while an album whispers itself into existence, and it is perfect. Heidi Berry's latest release, "Love," is at least that.

"Love" is Berry's first recording on the 4AD label. Previously known for her work on Creation Records, her label switch seems a logical one.

First and foremost, "Love" is a 4AD release, following the precedents of perfection set by labelmates The Cocteau Twins, This Mortal Coil and Dead Can Dance.

"Love" fulfills the promise that Sarah McLachlan's latest does not quite reach. Actually, it's McLachlan's 1988 debut that stands as a fitting predecessor to the instrumentation on "Love."

Much of the credit for the album should be given to the talented list of musicians Berry gathered for the recording of the album. Guitars and drums are provided by Levitation's Terry Bickers and Laurence O'Keefe, with other instrumentation coming from members of the Pale Saints and other 4AD labelmates.

How could she go wrong? She couldn't. Berry even covers Hüsker Dü's "Up In The Air" from that band's final and finest album, "Warehouse: Songs and Stories."

"Up In The Air" is a startlingly different version of Bob Mould's original composition. Only the lyrics remain the same. The rest of the song is filled with the ambience of Christopher Berry's shimmer guitar, filled in with a soprano saxophone improvisation and smooth acoustic guitar fills.

See LOVE on 14



Animal Logic

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