Tori Amos - The Beekeeper [2005]

1. Parasol 3:54
2. Sweet the Sting 4:14
3. The Power of Orange Knickers Featuring Damien Rice 3:35
4. Jamaica Inn 4:02
5. Barons of Suburbia 5:20
6. Sleeps With Butterflies 3:35
7. General Joy 4:12
8. Mother Revolution 3:58
9. Ribbons Undone 4:30
10. Cars and Guitars 3:44
11. Witness 6:03
12. Original Sinsuality 2:04
13. Ireland 3:41
14. The Beekeeper 6:49
15. Martha's Foolish 4:21
16. Hoochie Woman 2:34
17. Goodbye Pisces 3:36
18. Marys of the Sea 5:08
19. Toast 3:42

Mac Aladdin Guitar, Guitar (12 String), Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric), Mandolin Tori Amos Handclapping, Keyboards, Organ (Hammond), Producer, Vocals Matt Chamberlain Drums, Handclapping Kelsey Dobyns Vocals (Background) Alison Evans Handclapping Jon Evans Bass, Bass (Upright), Handclapping, Organ (Hammond) Chelsea Laird Handclapping London Community Gospel Choir Choir/Chorus, Vocals (Background) Damien Rice Vocals

Released in conjunction with Tori Amos: Piece by Piece, a memoir presented as a think piece co-written with music journalist Ann Powers, Tori Amos' eighth studio album, The Beekeeper, is also loosely autobiographical, a song cycle that chronicles emotional journeys through metaphorical gardens all tended by the beekeeper protagonist of the title. Good thing that this

concept was sketched out in the pre-release publicity, since The Beekeeper offers nothing close to a discernible concept in the album itself. At first, songs appear to spill forward in some sort of narrative, but the liner notes divide the 19 songs into six different groups -- "gardens," if you will -- that have nothing to do with how they're presented on the album, nor do they seem to have many sonic ties, and their lyrical connections are either tenuous or obtuse. Coming after 2002's Scarlet's Walk, whose title and songs clearly communicated its concept, this willful obtuseness might seem to hearken back to Tori's obstinately difficult albums of the mid-'90s, but The Beekeeper is miles away from the clanging darkness of Boys for Pele and From the Choirgirl Hotel. This is a bright, gleaming album that retains its sunny disposition even when the tempos grow slow and the melodies turn moody. Amos even occasionally punctuates her trademark elliptical piano ballads with organ-driven lite-funk -- a move that may alienate longtime fans, who may also balk at the album's highly polished sheen, but one that nevertheless fits well into the general feel of the record, lending it some genuine momentum. If the story line or concepts of the album aren't readily apparent, individual songs make their specific points well, and the record does flow with the grace and purpose of a song suite. As a cohesive work, The Beekeeper holds together better than nearly any of Tori's more ambitious albums, but there's a certain artsy distance that keeps this from being as emotionally immediate or as memorable as her first two records. But if Little Earthquakes was an album Amos could only have made in her twenties, The Beekeeper is a record perfectly suited for the singer/songwriter in her forties -- a little studied and deliberate, perhaps a shade too classy and consciously literary for its own good, but it's an ambitious, restless work that builds on her past work without resting on her laurels. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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