Marianne Faithfull – A Perfect Stranger – The Island Anthology (1998)

CD 1 *1.1 - Broken English 1.2 - Witches' Song 1.3 - Guilt 1.4 - The Ballad Of Lucy Jordan 1.5 - Working Class Hero 1.6 - Why D'Ya Do It? 1.7 - Sister Morphine 1.8 - Sweetheart 1.9 - Intrigue 1.10 - For Beauty's Sake 1.11 - So Sad 1.12 - Truth, Bitter Truth 1.13 - The Blue Millionaire (12") 1.14 - Falling From Grace 1.15 - Running For Our Lives* CD 2 *2.1 - Ballad Of The Soldier's Wife 2.2 - Trouble In Mind (The Return) 2.3 - Boulevard Of Broken Dreams 2.4 - Yesterdays 2.5 - Strange Weather 2.6 - Gloomy Sunday 2.7 - Hello Stranger 2.8 - As Tears Go By 2.9 - A Perfect Stranger 2.10 - Conversation On A Barstool 2.11 - A Waste Of Time 2.12 - Isolation 2.13 - Blazing Away 2.14 - When I Find My Life (Live) 2.15 - Times Square (Live) 2.16 - Ghost Dance 2.17 - Sleep 2.18 - Love In The Afternoon 2.19 - Bored By Dreams 2.20 – She*

Because more than half of the 35 songs on this two-disc retrospective of Marianne Faithfull's 1979-95 output come from her three great albums -- Broken English, Dangerous Acquaintances, and Strange Weather -- or are previously unreleased outtakes or B-sides from them, A Perfect Stranger: The Island Anthology makes a fine primer to Faithfull's often challenging, always mesmerizing (or would that be always challenging, often mesmerizing?) music. "Ballad of the Soldier's Wife," her solid contribution to 1985's Lost in the Stars: The Music of Kurt Weill, is also included, giving Faithfull's hauntingly tragic voice the resonance and attention it demands. Weill and Faithfull seem made for each other, as the bulk of the second disc (comprised of songs from her 1990 live album and the underachieving A Secret Life, as well as the career-capping Strange Weather) makes clear. But there's also a strain to some of these tracks, as if Faithfull's aesthetic wandering eventually will bring her to that elusive cabaret of her dreams. On her best recordings, it indeed sounds like she's home. --- Michael Gallucci, Rovi

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