

The Incredible String Band - The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter (1968)

Written by bluelover

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1. Koeeoaddi There [04:47] 2. The Minotaur's Song [03:19] 3. Witches Hat [02:34] 4. A Very Cellular Song [13:03] 5. Mercy I Cry City [02:46] 6. Waltz of the New Moon [05:07] 7. The Water Song [02:52] 8. Three Is a Green Crown [07:44] 9. Swift as the Wind [04:51] 10. Nightfall [02:30] Dolly Collins - Piano Mike Heron - Bass, Dulcimer, Guitar, Harpsichord, Horn, Keyboards, Organ, Sitar, Vocals Licorice McKechnie - Keyboards, Violin Rose Simpson - Bass, Percussion David Snell - Harp Robin Williamson - Gimbri, Guitar, Harmonica, Harp, Keyboards, Mandolin, Oud, Percussion, Piano, Violin, Vocals

The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter stands as the Incredible String Band's undisputed classic among critics and musicians alike -- ask Robert Plant, who touted its influence on Led Zeppelin's first album and general direction. Recorded and released in 1968, the album hit number five on the U.K. album charts, and was nominated for a Grammy in the U.S. It was produced by Joe Boyd, and engineered by John Wood using 24-track technology. Robin Williamson, Mike Heron, and Licorice McKechnie also utilized the talents of Dolly Collins (vocals, flute, organ, and piano), and David Snell (harp). Williamson and Heron employed a vast array of instruments on these songs including sitar, gimbri, pan pipe, oud, chahanai, mandolin, guitars, Hammond B-3, dulcimer, harpsichord, pan pipes, oud, water harp, and harmonica. The songs were much more freeform and experimental. Check Heron's 13-minute "A Very Cellular Song," which incorporates elements from a Sikh hymn and a Bahamian spiritual. Using the Hammond, a gimbri, pan pipes, handclaps, and other instruments, it begins on a two-chord vamp that employs a vocal round in five-part harmony, with secular and spiritual lyrics. It's simply infectious. Other notables include the stellar "The Minotaur's Song," with its call and response chorus played on guitars, upright piano, and six-part harmonies. It melds a children's song with a drinking song to humorous and utterly memorable effect. Elsewhere, "Waltz of the New Moon," employs two-chord drones on acoustic guitar with a meld of Middle Eastern vocal styles and Scottish field songs. "Three Is a Green Crown" is a psychedelic folk song in all its hypnotic droning glory with Williamson's primitive sitar playing featured prominently. The tender, exotic, "Nightfall," the album's closer, is a lullaby, with guitar and sitar accompanying the vocal in whole tone intervals. The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter is the most ambitious, focused, and brilliantly executed record in ISB's catalog. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter is arguably the Incredible String Band's finest studio work. The record reached the top 5 in the UK album charts when first released in March 1968 and was nominated for a Grammy in the USA. The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter was a departure from the band's earlier recordings, relying heavily on a more layered production, with imaginative use of the then new multi-track recording techniques. Robert Plant has said that Led Zeppelin found their way by playing Hangman's and following the instructions.

The album's centrepiece is Mike Heron's 'A Very Cellular Song' which incorporates a Sikh hymn and the Bahamian spiritual 'I Bid You Goodnight' (learnt from the recordings of Joseph Spence. Other highlights include Williamson's 'The Minotuar's Song' and 'The Water Song'. The careful remastering is quite revelatory – bringing out all the sonic majesty of the recording. The Fledg'ling edition has been carefully remastered by original producer Joe Boyd and engineer John Wood. Packaged in a stunning digipac with all elements of the original artwork and new sleevenotes from Robin Williamson. --- thebeesknees.com

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