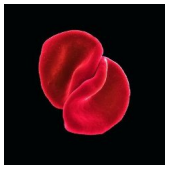
Peter Gabriel - Scratch My Back (2010)



01. Heroes
02. The Boy In The Bubble
03. Mirrorball
04. Flume
05. Listening Wind
06. The Power Of The Heart
07. My Body Is A Cage
08. The Book Of Love
09. I Think It's Going To Rain Today
10. Apres Moi
11. Philadelphia
12. Street Spirit (Fade Out)

Personnel: Peter Gabriel – vocals, piano on "Flume" The London Scratch Orchestra – violins, violas, cellos, double basses, flute, bassoon, trumpets, horns, trombones, bass trombones, piano Melanie Gabriel – vocals on "The Book of Love" Jason Rebello – piano on "The Power of the Heart" The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford – choir on "My Body Is a Cage" Eli Hibit – Backing Rhythm Guitar on "Street Spirit (Fade Out)"

Considering the slow trickle of completed albums he has released since becoming a superstar in 1986 -- just two albums of songs with vocals, paired with two albums of soundtracks and two live records -- deliberate is expected from Peter Gabriel, so the slow, hushed crawl of Scratch My Back is no shock. What may be a shock is that Gabriel chose to follow 2002's Up with a covers album but, like all of his work, this 2010 record is highly conceptual no matter how minimal the end result may be. Designed as the first half of a two-part project where Gabriel would cover 12 different artists who would then return the favor by recording their own versions of Gabriel's compositions -- the counterpart album naturally bearing the title I'll Scratch Yours -- Scratch My Back divides neatly between six songs from his peers (Bowie, Paul Simon, Randy Newman, Neil Young, Lou Reed, David Byrne) and six songs from younger artists (Radiohead, Arcade Fire, Stephin Merritt, Bon Iver, Elbow, Regina Spektor). Gabriel doesn't dodge familiar

tunes, choosing to sing "Heroes" and "Street Spirit (Fade Out)," but he twists each tune to his own needs, arranging everything with nothing more than piano and strings, a change that's almost jarring on Simon's "The Boy in the Bubble," yet it stays true to the undercurrent of melancholy in the melody. Indeed, all of Scratch My Back is stark, sober, and spare, delving ever deeper inward, a triumph of intellect over emotion -- a noted contrast to almost all cover albums that celebrate the visceral, not the cerebral. Immediate it may not be but fascinating it is, and after hearing Gabriel turn all 12 of these songs into something unmistakably his own, the appetite is surely whetted for its companion piece. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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