Daria – Strawberry Fields Forever: Songs By The Beatles (2016)

1. When I'm Sixty-Four (4:00) 2. Strawberry Fields Forever (4:43) 3. Come Together (4:08) 4. Fixing A Hole (4:32) 5. Can't Buy Me Love (3:47) 6. Bird Medley Blackbird – Icarus – Bye Bye Blackbird (5:54) 7. The Fool On The Hill (4:21) 8. If I Fell (4:16) 9. Julia (5:02) 10. Helter Skelter (3:41) 11. She's Going Home (3:34) Daria Vocals, Vocals (Background) Jonathan Alford Fender Rhodes, Organ, Piano Sam Bevan Bass, Guitar, Keyboards Sheldon Brown Saxophone Deszon Claiborne Drums Roberta Donnay Vocals (Background) Colin Douglas Percussion Matt Eakle Flute Michaelle Goerlitz Percussion Matthew Charles Heulitt Soloist Henry Hung Trumpet Jean-Michel Hure Guitar Alex Kelly Cello Melecio Magdaluyo Soloist Mike Rinta Trombone Annie Stocking Vocal Producer, Vocals (Background)

The Beatles' music has taken such a stronghold in our collective memories throughout the decades it is often futile to sing them with a new voice. Yet, the creative license is a right of musicians in particular in the reinterpretation of established pieces, while the worthiness of the results rest in the eyes of the beholder. But Beatles in jazz? In the case of this production, Strawberry Fields Forever, Daria vocalized the Beatles classics in her sultry jazziness, although it was difficult initially to silence the mind from comparing her music to the originals. Per Joe Cohen, husband to Daria and president of The Lotus Group, the recording " consists of 13 individual tunes in 11 tracks. One tune, 'Bird Medley', is a medley of 'Blackbird,' 'Icarus' by Ralph Towner and 'Bye Bye Blackbird.' One track is her original tune 'She's Leaving Home'. The remainder are all "Re-Imagined Beatles" in Jazz, Pop, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban rhythms."

Daria studied and mentored with names like Bobby McFerrin, Mark Murphy, Maye Cavallaro, and Celia Malheiros and toured for ten years with Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks. She is also a music educator at several institutes. All of these exposures and experiences must be the primary contributing factor to a keen spontaneity in her vocalizations, which drew me into her musical canvass.

Is it possible to be a true Beatles fan and love this recording? Lennon might as well be turning in his grave; and they made it a dance album.

I was toe tapping throughout the entirety of the album. Daria's rendition bore almost no resemblance to the original, but boy was it lyrical. There was such creativity in each song as to set Daria and her band apart from other Beatles reinterpreters. Daria sings with effortless energy and spirit that was complimented perfectly by a world-class ensemble of musicians; for example, an all-female background chorus to the already Latin dance-evoking "If I Fell" was sheer magic. That very adaptive talent of hers breathed a sometime unfamiliar and yet evocative pulse to an old, familiar emotion. And the music in this production also bore remarkable testament to the musicianship of her band. One could argue that Daria and her band were well groomed to produce a dance album and just needed a canvas on which to pen their masterpiece. The Beatles' music was that canvas. This time around, anyway.

Mixed and mastered at The Lab, Novato and recorded in the Laughing Tiger Studios in San Rafael, northern California, this recording reeks of audiophile entanglements. The music hailed from the wine and music country with sonic brilliance and transparency in both the CD and the 24/96 audio file. Manny Lacarrubba, the recording engineer, was the designer of the $100k The Lotus Group Granada loudspeakers and the level of fidelity in this recording of his is remarkable. Daria even managed to get Joe to play his sitar in "Strawberry Fields Forever."

No, I think Lennon is smiling down from above. ---Constantine Soo, dagogo.com

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