## Agnes Obel - Philharmonics (2010)

*1 Falling, Catching 2 Riverside 3 Brother Sparrow 4 Just So 5 Beast 6 Louretta 7 Avenue 8 Philharmonics 9 Close Watch 10 Wallflower 11 Over The Hill 12 On Powdered Ground* Agnes Obel - Performer, Producer, Mixed By, Recorded By + Alex Brüel Flagstad - Vocals (Background) Isabelle Klemt - Cello Robert Kondorosi - Guitar Frederique Labbow - Cello Daniel Matz - Beats Anne Müller - Cello

Agnes Obel's striking success in her home country of Denmark with her debut is all the more remarkable given how understated Philharmonics is as a listen, a seemingly straightforward piano/vocal album that isn't. Combining a strong ear for immediate appeal -- Obel's deep singing voice is lovely and her ear for a calm hook is crucial -- with a feeling of just-unsettled-enough unease is key. Part of it lies in Obel's ear for vocal arrangements; hearing her own overdubbed harmonies showcases her talents further, both as performer and producer. But there's something that's not trying to be straightforward here. There's an elegant, slipping darkness that creeps in around the corners, like something is being hidden in plain sight. The short instrumental "Falling, Catching" starts off the album on a sweet note -- perhaps sickly sweet, there's something so strangely focused in its intensity that it almost unsettles. Her first vocal provides a bit of necessary contrast on "Riverside" immediately thereafter, but at the same time further showcases how gently unusual Philharmonics ends up being -- it may not be Patty Waters, say, but it's not Vanessa Carlton or KT Tunstall either. The underpinning bass part on the cover of John Cale's "I Keep a Close Watch" set against the high intensity of the lead piano gives a good personal stamp to a standard, but it's her subtle variety throughout the album that impresses even more. There's "Avenue"'s music-box-meets-near-film-noir-jazz on the one hand, while "Louretta," another short instrumental, has a controlled theatricality that seems like it should soundtrack a Neil Gaiman ballet. "On Powdered Ground" has a gentler sweetness that feels like a slight respite toward the end, but Philharmonics in general aims for the darkly beautiful and succeeds on an unexpected level. ---Net Raggett, AllMusic Review

download (mp3 @320 kbs):

yandex mediafire uloz.to mega 4shared cloudmailru gett

back