



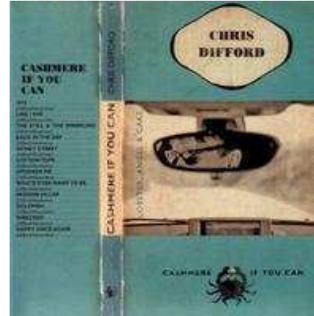
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Chris Difford

Cashmere If You Can

Review by Gary Hill

Best known for his work with Squeeze, Chris Difford's latest release at times sounds like that group. Overall it's a nice slab of songs that include heartfelt vocals and insightful lyrics that call things the way Difford sees them. Those are the things that remain constant throughout. Musical styles change on the disc and some cuts are more successful than others. All in all, though, this album should please fans of Squeeze, but have a more far reaching appeal at the same time. I should also mention the cool retro packaging that looks like a mini-gatefold LP sleeve.



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Track by Track Review

1975



Percussion leads this in and the guitars bring a real rock and roll kind of approach. Musically this feels like something from Tommy James. It's a great retro styled rock and roller. It's a cool tune.

Like I Did

This is more like the kind of sound one might expect from Squeeze, but there's also some Caribbean elements. The lyrics on this one are about the phenomenon of children acting like their parents did in the teen years.

The Still And The Sparkling

Based on melodic rock, there's almost some jazz built into this cut. It's a pretty pop styled tune that's quite effective. I particularly like the instrumental interlude on this one. It's got a lush arrangement and works quite well.

Back In The Day

The little riff that opens this makes me think of early Who, but it works out from there into a cool, open arrangement that's got a lot of old rock and roll blended with Squeeze built into it. This would not have been out of place at all in the 1960s. There is some rather country-like violin in the cut later.

Sidney Street

Intricate, sedate and slow moving, this is a mellow ballad. The arrangement gets fairly lush, but there aren't any big changes or alterations in the tune.

Cottontops

Here we get a song that's a lot more of a rocker. There's a lot of psychedelia built into this cool beast.

Upgrade Me

There's a bit of a jazzy element to this pretty number. We also get some European café sounds built into it.

Who'd Ever Want To Be

Another pretty and gentle piece, the arrangement is quite involved. The disc is starting to feel a little monolithic at this point, but this cut is actually one of the strongest on the set. It would have worked better if the position were traded with the previous number. The lyrics are a bit extreme at one point along the way.

Passion Killer

While this opens with an electronica influenced sound, it turns out to be some harder rocking music. There's still some of that dance music element on the chorus, but overall this is a smoking hot rocker. The lyrics again have some things that aren't recommended for all audiences.

Goldfish

Acoustic guitar opens this and we get some female vocals in a non-lyrical fashion over the top. Those vocals show up at other points in the song. I like the story-teller sort of approach to Difford's vocals. The female vocals also present themselves in lyrical fashion as a duet performance. This is almost progressive rock like, but in a stripped down way. It's one of the most musically understated numbers of the set, but it's also one of the intricate and powerful cuts. I'd consider this the strongest piece of the whole set.

Wrecked

Here's a slow, rather blues meets country song with a more modern production. This is stripped down, but very classic in sound. Some of the lyrics seem to be about looking back at a crazy life through the eyes of an older maturity. The arrangement gets a major infusion of power and symphonic elements at the end to great effect.

Happy Once Again

The first minute and a half or so of this are in an acoustic guitar and vocal ballad arrangement. Other instruments come in as icing on the cake later. This is a heartfelt, slow moving ballad that's quite pretty and effective. It's actually one of the highlights of the set because of the evocative nature.

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