



JOANNA NEWSOM

Ys

DC303 ▶ 2xLP/CD

Songs:

EMILY

MONKEY & BEAR

SAWDUST & DIAMONDS

ONLY SKIN

COSMIA

A new Joanna Newsom album – yes! Well actually, **Ys**. You pronounce it “ees” – and anything more you’d like to know about it, you can please look it up. What **Ys** means to us: it’s the title of an almost unspeakably incredible new Joanna Newsom album. Five songs, fifty-five minutes, one what-an-album!

Ahem. All frothy hype aside, the Consumer and the Fan may wish to know that:

Ys is to Ms. Newsom a dream collaboration between her voice and harp and a full orchestra – a sound many of us fans have thought we were hearing when listening with closed eyes at her concert performances.

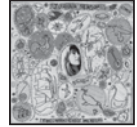
Songs familiar to Joanna’s following are a big part of **Ys**, having been performed in concert over the past year – but not with the arrangements you’ll find on four of the five songs here (one song being “classic” Joanna; which is to say, solo). The songs, conceived with harp and voice and tracked as such by Steve Albini, were arranged with kindness and love by the legendary Van Dyke Parks over several months of correspondence and collaboration with Joanna.

At the end of the day, the instrument count included strings, woodwinds, and brass plus dulcimer, marimba, various percussive instruments (including a horse skull!), banjo, mandolin, electric bass guitar (played by master of mellow Lee Sklar), electric guitar (played by jazz-great(-and-definitive-MAD-magazine-authority) Grant Geisseman), and accordion played by Van Dyke himself.

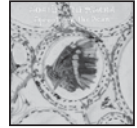
If this seems like a bit of an overfull house – wait’ll you hear the mix Jim O’Rourke made of it! It’s light and lilting, with Joanna front and center and sounds blowing and tearing and swelling around her, in perfect consort. The wide-screen beauty of **Ys** is due to, among other things, a scrupulously all-analog production involving forty-odd tracks spread over two synched-up 24-track tape machines, mixed to tape and mastered at Abbey Road, home of the all-analog mastering path!

Benjamin Vierling of Grass Valley, CA did the cover painting old-master style, with layers of egg-tempera and glazes. Strictly 16th-century processes, just like the recording of the album. When something suits something else so sweetly, it can’t be denied. **Ys** is the proof, and a sweet and stormy proof it is. We’d call it album of the year – but which of the five-or-so thousand years to place it in? Joanna’s music belongs to all time – and 2006 is quite the lucky year for having it. **Ys!**

PREVIOUS
RELEASES
from
JOANNA
NEWSOM



THE MILK-EYED MENDER
DC263 LP/CD



“Sprout and the Bean”
DC287 CD single



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