

DISC DOMAIN

Album Reviews

BJORK
POST
ELEKTRA RECORDS
BY REBECCA KRAUS

How fitting it is that Bjork's single "Army of Me" paraded out in front of the other self-assured songs from the *Tank Girl* soundtrack. Over industrial clanks and torpedoing guitars, she indignantly sings her sentiments: "Stand up/You've got to manage/I won't sympathize anymore/If you complain once more/You'll get an army of me." This same track startlingly opens her second solo album, *Post*.

The eccentric former singer of the Icelandic pop group the Sugarcubes, Bjork has continued her emigration, not only from her old band and her home in Reykjavik, but in her musical confidence. *Post* is a brash kaleidoscope of textures and sounds, highly produced yet complimenting the most valuable resource Bjork Guðmundsdóttir possesses: her resonant, mesmerizing voice. She can swoon delicately on "Hyper-Ballad" and belt out gruff hiccups on "The Modern Things." With much aid from former Massive Attack singer/DJ Tricky, and Graham Massey of 808 State, the sounds of *Post* are experimental, innovative, and always surprising as the album spins deeper.

Just when Bjork is disturbed, screaming "All the modern things have always existed/They've just been waiting/To come out/And multiply/And take over," her refrain repeats to the scratches of a broken record and we're left contemplating the weirdness of her choices. Then the next track, "Blow a Fuse," has her sauntering playfully to the tune of big band panchache — in this case, a wartime ditty originally recorded by Hollywood star Betty Hutton. With frustrated heartbreak, Bjork sings the peacefulness of new love "till it's over and it's nice and quiet but soon starts another big RIOT. Wahhhh!" the unabashed scream amidst the blasting horn section puts Bjork well above the level of typical alternative fare; she might very well sum up the tribulations of love in that one guttural explosion. Her decision to cover this tune reiterates how whimsical this Icelandic innovator can be. Bjork is in a gorgeous sonic stratosphere all by herself, with lots of friends supporting her eccentric flight.

The collaboration comes quite gracefully. On "Isobel," she works with Nellee Hopper, Marius De Vries and Sjon to create a mystical air around the title character. Beginning with synthetic horns, the track's sounds transform into jungle rhythms to lend Isobel's world the air of a fable: "In a forest pitch-dark/Glowed the tiniest spark/It burst into flame/Like me/Like me." And when Bjork teases seductively on "Possible Maybe," she is as alluring as the pulsating techno grooves right beside her.

Post will come as a satisfying follow-up to Bjork's first solo album *Debut*. Since "Human Behavior" and "Big Time Sensuality" from that album became big dance hits, some tracks from *Post* might follow, further widening this chanteuse's appeal. But outside of the dance hall, in the fantastic regions of imagination, this album in its entirety is most curious and clever.