

CD Review: Janie Christensen

by [Sharon Nichols](#), February 28, 2012



Janie Christensen
Painted Birds



(2011, Independent)

Paris-born Hudson Valley pianist/guitarist Janie Christensen has teamed up with her husband, co-producer and multi-instrumentalist Angelo Ficara, on this 13-track recording, which is every bit as much affecting as it is off-center. Though fickle in its genre-hopping, it is nonetheless an original. “Come to Harm” starts off the recording with a funky world beat, some light-as-air electronica, and smooth, echoing vocals reminiscent of the mid-’80s work of Happy Rhodes. “Now You See It, Now You Don’t” flips the mood 180 degrees, starting with lilting synth strings and a yearning message—“Don’t try so hard to understand / Let it go free”—before snapping again into a fun, Latin jazz vibe. The gentle “Moon” utilizes retro, feel-good keys that would fit nicely in the easy listening or adult contemporary categories, and Christensen even works in a bit of Rodgers and Hammerstein-esque lyricism.

“The Best in Me” is a melancholy, solo piano tune with a country music feel that brings Mary Chapin Carpenter to mind; “All of Your Cowboys” also runs nicely along this vein. “White House on the Beach” is another jazzy adult contemporary track with an unexpected electric guitar riff midway through. “One in a Million” introduces a light rock/folk strain, and the

title track is an ode to healing from a relationship, showcasing Christensen's stunning vocals plunging into a depth of heartbreak. The artist has stated that interpreting life through imagery is the most natural thing in the world to her, and it shows on the ever poignant *Painted Birds*. janiechristensen.com.

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