

Kingston Daily Freeman

Christensen highly personal in 'Painted Birds'

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By David Malachowski
Reviewer



ARTIST: Janie Christensen

ALBUM: "Painted Birds"

Born in Paris to American parents, Janie Christensen's family moved to New York City, and then later to the Hudson Valley. She studied classical piano, but after her grandfather gave her a guitar, all that changed. Meeting her husband, she moved back to the city.

In "Painted Birds," recorded at the ever-popular NRS Studios in Catskill, Christensen played piano while her partner Angelo Ficara handled the guitar duties, bass and drum programming, and together they produced this highly personal work.

Christensen sings, "He has no compass, he has no chart" in the anxious "Come To Harm," which has a world music vibe with a percussive pulse, tempered by new age keyboards, and recalls Hudson Valley fave Happy Rhodes. The ethereal "Now You See It, Now You Don't" is powerful with just voice and keyboard

swells, and eventually opens up with a melodic guitar and drums solo. A very 1980s keyboard-sound dominates "Moon," and the guitar driven "Neon" finds Christensen at her most expressive, detailing the story of a restaurant singer playing for complete strangers.

Title-track "Painted Birds" is a lush, orchestrated piece, which creates a soothing, calming force while showing off Christensen's strong vibrato and emotional delivery, with lines like "If memories were painted birds/I'd line them up and get my gun."

Christensen doesn't seem to perform (not even in her music videos), but you can find her music at her website. Visit <http://www.janiechristensen.com/>

David Malachowski is a guitarist, producer and freelance journalist living in Woodstock.

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