



Caravan of Thieves

album review

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Album: Bouquet

Artist: Caravan of Thieves

The music of Bouquet from Caravan of Thieves will catch hold of your soul, it's languidly frantic, with sensuous backbone to it and something just a little sick hiding behind it all. It proves that acoustic doesn't have to be boring. Instead, it's bold. Even though the sound is borrowed from all sorts of musical traditions and eras, the gypsy jazz mishmash of retro and a hint of gothica somehow come together for its own immutable sound.

If you like World War II harmony heavy torch songs, down and dirty gypsy fiddle music, folk music, Old Crow Medicine Show or even the Winter Sounds then you might also dig Caravan of Thieves. It's difficult to compare them to anything because it's an intersection of styles and time periods.

'Butcher's Wife' is apt to be a favorite of those who dug Sweeney Todd as it follows the fate of several men who end up in a freezer, possibly next to some tasty veal cutlets.

The harmony of the singers holds together songs that appear, on the surface, to be almost chaotic. They work seamlessly together.

'Ghostwriter', the first song on the CD, tends to remain in your head. It will stick to your consciousness long after your last listen. Innocence plays off a wry, slightly strange sense of humor and greed on some of the tracks, as in 'Angels in Cages' and 'Box of Charms.'

There's a palpable fear of sweeping emotion throughout the album. It's based upon the notion that passion might just carry you away, but a distinct headiness and enjoyment at the suspicion that such lust or love might just destroy. Here's a few lines from 'Butcher's Wife' that encapsulates this feeling:

This scene can have, no happy ending/ But in the while, it's worth pretending

If you care, not to tango with the knife/ And be the next in line/ If you care not meet the afterlife/ Then don't get friendly with the butcher's wife.

The bass beat barely keeps the emotion and music grounded, but does, just. And that just is what makes the music so awesome. Because it skates a dangerous edge and exalts the extreme.

And they do it retro style. Not just that, but these tunes are catchy. I found myself singing them in the shower. I can't believe these guys haven't taken the mass market by storm yet.

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