

a one page zine of reviews, poems, stories, shorts, rants, scraps, & junk...glints of real, flickers of true, cultural triggers, mental activation, emotional light, trips, wonderment...

## Sweet Mistake

by Catherine Daly

If I should say in two lines  
what I could  
write  
in one,  
  
if I should repeat,  
I should say I love you no more  
and no less than writing  
I love you. No more could I say.  
Nor could I write  
less.

## REVIEWS

### Moody Blues

#### Strange Times

Universal

After repeated listenings to this new Moodies album, their first in eight years, I'd rate it up with the band's early 80's albums, Long Distance Voyager and The Present. Which means I think it's pretty good. The guy they have doing all the keyboards and orchestrations is really good and has an ear for what the songs need. It took a couple listenings to truly appreciate it. At first listen it might sound like the Moodies are trying to be too modern. But that's what I thought about "Gemini Dream" too. The production is phenomenal. It's got some great moments where you're thinking "wow what a cool sound". On most tracks I think Graeme Edge is actually playing the drums, which we haven't heard for quite a while. He's even got a poem as the last track. Ray Thomas has only one tune, a very light child-like song--pretty typical for Ray. But it's a nice song, and I wish he had more on the album. The band's voices have held up well over the years. John's ultra-moody, slow ballads are recorded with his voice way up front and dry. It's great to hear. Ray's voice is as smooth as it was on "The Tide Rushes In".

Granted, it's no Seventh Sojourn, but that would really be asking a lot from a band that's been around for 35 years. It's just great to hear them in such good form, and it's rather appropriate that the Moody Blues are here to make a musical statement at the pre-dawn of the millennium. After all, it's what they've been singing about for years!

- Jim Morris

## Challenge

### Acoustic Universe

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Challenge is the duo of Allison Lindsay (lead vocals) and Arno Verstaapen (acoustic guitar). Arno shoulders most of the songwriting burden, while Allison's way out in front of the mix with her muscular vocals. She's definitely in the "power vocalist" tradition of mainstream rock. If you like Annie Wilson and Pat Benatar, you'll probably enjoy Allison Lindsay's voice.

While Lindsay's earnest vocals seem retrofitted for a hard rock mix, the songs don't go for that feel -- they strike a soft-rock / acoustic pop pose. The acoustic sound is beefed up a bit by a tight rhythm section and the swirling sound of the venerable Hammond B-3 organ. The arrangements are smart and assured -- not breaking any new ground, but confident and smooth...

- Jim Esch

## Guppy

by Daniel A. Olivas

The light from the aquarium flickered and undulated across Quassia's brown face in white and blue waves. She silently inspected the various fish that swam in and out of the overgrown seaweed and a ceramic replica of the Titanic. Quassia bent at her waist in an almost perfect 90-degree angle and rested both hands on edge of the aquarium stand so that she looked to Guy like a human-sized letter F. Except that Quassia had larger breasts than the letter F and her beautiful vast expanse of naked skin shimmered like no F could. She tossed her head back with a quick jerk to banish that one unruly lock of black hair to where it belonged but her effort merely invited another strand to join the other to obscure her left eye even more completely.

"Shit," Quassia murmured.

## Alejandro Velasco, ARCANA

### Ludicamento

Paraíso  
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This instrumental album composed by Alejandro Velasco and performed by ARCANA (including Velasco on piano) is a playful blend of what I would call neoclassical ensemble music with a new age vibe.

A stately grace adorns the light compositions, and makes me think they would play perfectly in the right setting as soundtrack music for independent films. The basic setup is piano, violoncellos, soprano sax/flute, and various percussion instruments like marimba, bongos, (and many more cool sounding percussive things). You get a chamber music feel here; airy but far from frivolous. At times, the Latin influences are pleasantly apparent.

It took me about 4 listens to really get inside this music, but now I'm hooked. It makes for lovely listening in quiet times by oneself, or while stuck inside your car during a busy commute (somehow the forward motion of the hammered marimba rhythms evokes this sense of disembodied travel I sometimes experience while trapped in my automobile).

- Jim Esch

Guy sat on his bed admiring the view. "You could always cut your hair," he offered as he took a sip of his San Miguel before putting the bottle on the nightstand thereby knocking to the floor a battered copy of last Monday's *Daily Journal*. "You're always complaining how you can't control it."

Quassia popped up and turned to Guy. Six-feet-one in her bare feet. A full inch taller than Guy. And he loved exploring every centimeter of her.

"That's not why I said, 'Shit.'"

"Why then?" said Guy as he pulled the blanket over his groin. Though they often walked around his or her apartment without much clothing on, he felt slightly embarrassed when he felt an erection coming and all the lights were on. "What do you mean?" he added trying to sound nonchalant.

Noticing Guy's erection, Quassia sighed and pushed her hair off her face. This time her attempt was successful and she trained both of her large, green eyes on Guy's face. "Your guppy looks funny. A little sick or something."

They'd been dating for six weeks and having sex for four of those weeks. Guy liked how Quassia wanted to wait a bit before a full physical commitment. And she'd been taking the next step slowly, too. Guy already wanted her to move in but she said that time will tell if that were a good idea. So, in the meantime, they switched off. During the workweek, they stayed in her well-furnished two-bedroom apartment in the Fairfax area so that they could eat lox and bagels at Canter's before they headed off to their respective law offices. On the weekends, they crashed at Guy's run down little place at mid-Wilshire near the poverty law office Guy founded fifteen years ago. Quassia was Guy's star student at UCLA where he taught a course in civil rights during his one-year sabbatical back in '92. Now she worked an eighty-hour week in a large Century City firm for \$120K a year -- twice what Guy made. Guy thought that this was funny because he was twice Quassia's age.

"Why do you care so much about that guppy?"

"I love guppies." She remained by the aquarium standing with her legs spread and arms folded like a voluptuous female version of Balzac or a defiant and naked Statue of Liberty.

"I wonder why they're called 'guppies.'"

"A Trinidadian clergyman and naturalist. Robert John Lechmore Guppy. Sent specimens to the British Museum in the late 1800's."

"Is 'Trinidadian' a word?"

Quassia shot a stinging look at Guy. He tried to ignore the power of her almost translucent blue-green eyes. Guy assumed she got her skin coloring from her Mexican father and her eyes from her German mother. But he had no idea where she got her African name though he never bothered to ask.

"Come back to bed," said Guy as he patted the mattress with his right hand. "Relax. It's Sunday morning and it's the only time I have with you where we can be at peace. You work too many goddamned hours."

"*Unos nacieron para mandar y otros para obedecer*," she said as she turned back to the aquarium.

"Don't give me that shit," Guy said with his temper rising. Though he couldn't speak Spanish as well as Quassia -- her father was born and raised in Mexico City -- Guy's vocabulary wasn't all that bad and he had many Spanish-speaking clients with whom he had no trouble communicating. He resented Quassia's falling into Spanish whenever she criticized him. "I do not order you around."

"Yes, Professor."

For a minute or so, they remained silent with only the aquarium's ancient air pump filling the void with an asthmatic hum. Guy decided that it wasn't worth losing his temper and saying something to hurt her. He wanted to make love right then so he had to be careful not to push Quassia's mood to where it could not be retrieved within a reasonable time.

"This guppy is really quite sick," Quassia finally said.

"Can I do something?" Guy asked in the tenderest tone he could muster.

"I doubt it. When it's this far along, there's really nothing to do but wait for the inevitable."

Guy didn't like the generalized sweep of Quassia's prognosis. She stood straight again and walked over to the bed.

"Move over, *mi amor*," she said as she slid under the covers.

Guy lay down and put his arm under Quassia's head. Her hair tickled his nose and he could smell lemons and perspiration and cigarettes. She sighed as she nuzzled Guy's chest hair. Several curly gray hairs around Guy's nipples cried out for attention so Quassia nibbled at them.

"You like that little guppy, don't you?"

"Of course. He's so beautiful."

"Yes, he is. Like you."

Quassia laughed. "But I'm female and he's a male."

"Yes," said Guy not admitting that he always thought of guppies -- all guppies -- as female.

"They also call them 'rainbow fish' but I like 'guppy' better. It's *muy linda*."

Guy pulled Quassia closer. "Yes, it's *muy linda*." He reached over and put his hand on her right breast. "*Muy linda*. Like you."

Quassia sighed. "Yeah. Like me."

## Contributors

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