



Panel of Judges, EP (2004)

Weather Records WR007

Dion Nania, Vocals/Guitar/Bass Guitar

Alison Bolger, Vocals/Guitar/Bass Guitar/Keyboard

Paul Williams, Drums

With the metabolism of a crocodile, they relax in the shade, sunglasses drawn, ready to strike. Panel of Judges can be so languid, yet so fiery.

In sound, they can be a little like The Chills, in attitude, a little like The New Season, but hey, it's Panel of Judges - the imitable precursors of style. And what do we have here: 4 new songs, a devil's playground of droney basslines, scratchy riffs and beats packing maximum swing.

Guitar, bass and drums, ever so sharply-angled, come off spangled, tangled and mysteriously newfangled. In other words, perfect sounds for Melbourne 2004.

The moustachioed son of an obscure prince, Dion often see himself in a white suit and sunglasses. He gave up the jewels for a guitar and now, with the help of two others, creates odd, melodic mysteries in shadowy Melbourne rock and roll clubs. Dion sings these three songs better than he has sung any song ever. His *Faux Park*, so casual in its pop mastery, has a bassline anxious to take you dancing. Later, Alison's keyboard greets you like a sun blast in a snowstorm. When Alison takes lead vocal, she also takes lead guitar. When she sings on *Forest for the Trees*, she sings well, almost like an innocent Kitten, learning to be contemptible (appreciative times for cat owners everywhere). The unaffected vocals, so taught by Lou Reed, are superb as she sings of a moment which "was wonderful and (she) was so free." Dig that metallic lead riff, bending the powerhouse drumming. Speaking of which, it's a serious time for the interesting son of a private eye. He's Paul Williams and he makes the rhythm go, handling the kit like a 24-hour man.

Emotions get snidely displaced; giving these 4 tunes a sublime nihilism that shames so-called sincere punks. So, as *Open Casket* chides in rather perfectly, "relax, I was only joking, dry your tears and let's go dancing". So dance silly, to the definitive release of 2004 and okay, 2005 and so on...

These four tracks follow a full-length (*Cool Fool*, 1999) and a spate of earlier singles, which were all quite drunk and delightful.

Shane Moritz

Panel of Judges launched this record in Melbourne at The Rob Roy Hotel on Saturday Sept. 4, and were admirably supported by Love of Diagrams, The Grey Tapes, Barrage and DJ People.

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