

Jacques Brel - Ne me Quitte Pas (1972)



1. *Ne me quitte pas* 2. *Marieke* 3. *On n'oublie rien* 4. *Les Flamandes* [play](#) 5. *Les Prénoms de Paris*

[play](#)

6. *Quand on n'a que l'amour* 7. *Les Biches* 8. *Le Prochain Amour* 9. *Le Moribond* 10. *La Valse à mille temps* 11. *Je ne sais pas*

Personnel: Jacques Brel – composer, vocals François Rauber – orchestra conductor, arrangements Gérard Jouannest – piano

Much was made of Jacques Brel's decision to retire from the music industry in 1968, a resolution which, a handful of soundtrack recordings notwithstanding, he maintained until 1977, the year before his death. In fact, his silence was not as profound as is generally believed. In 1972, Barclay prevailed upon him to return to the studio to re-record 11 of the better-known songs which he cut for the Philips label at the outset of his career. Of course these would subsequently be disseminated over a string of future compilations; *Ne Me Quitte Pas*, however, draws them all together in one collection. Brel's original recordings were cut with a variety of arrangers and orchestras; here he is paired with his longest-standing allies: arranger François Rauber and pianist Gérard Jouannest. Their instinctive sympathy and understanding is this set's most noticeable asset -- Brel in the mid-'50s was a snarling dynamo, the likes of whom had never before set foot in a staid French recording studio. The results, while spectacular, were also uncertain. He retained that fire in 1972, but his companions knew how to harness it.

The title track, "Marieke," and "Le Moribond" offer dramatic improvements on their original incarnations; other tracks are at least dynamic reinterpretations. Dramatically, too, one cannot help but note how Brel has borrowed at least a hint of presentation and arrangement from some of the English and American artists who took so much from him in the past: Scott Walker, Rod McKuen, and Mort Shuman included. The result might not be the purest of Brel's albums, but as an extracurricular curio, it is a fascinating listen. ---Dave Thompson, allmusic.com

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