Francoise Hardy - If You Listen (1971/2000)

01. If You Listen (3:38) 02. Ocean (3:51) 03. Until It's Time For You To Go (3:01) 04. The Garden Of Jane Delawnay (3:38) 05. Sometimes (3:13) 06. Let My Name Be Sorrow (3:08) 07. Brulure (3:01) 08. Can't Get The One I Want (2:52) 09. I Think It's Gonna Rain Today (2:44) 10. Take My Hand For A While (3:03) 11. Bown Bown Bown (3:55) 12. Till The Morning Comes (1:35) 13. Message Personnel (English Version) (4:15) Arranged By, Conductor : Hervé Roy (tracks: 6), Micky Jones (tracks: 11), Tommy Brown (3) (tracks: 1, 11), Tony Cox (tracks: 1 to 5, 7 to 10, 12).

Sung (except for one track) in English, this 1972 album (originally titled just Françoise Hardy) was reissued on CD by Virgin France in 2000 under the title If You Listen, and issued in some foreign territories under yet different titles in the 1970s. However it was titled, it was a good, tasteful, and subdued set of folk-rock- and singer/songwriter-influenced covers (though the one French song, "Brulure," was the sole original Hardy composition). It's no surprise that the mood here is dignified rainy-day sorrow. But that was Hardy's forte, and the arrangements, emphasizing acoustic guitar and light strings, seem to indicate she was doing some listening to British folk-rock and American singer/songwriters. So does the choice of covers, including songs by Buffy Sainte-Marie, Neil Young ("Till the Morning Comes"), Beverley Martyn, and Randy Newman ("I Think It's Gonna Rain Today"). There's also the quite obscure "The Garden of Jane Delawnay," a misspelled interpretation of "The Garden of Jane Delawney" by the British folk-rock band the Trees; "Let My Name Be Sorrow," originally done by Mary Hopkin; and a couple of tunes co-written by Mick Jones, later of Foreigner. None of songs rate among her best work, but it's still a good album, often overlooked even by Hardy fans and notable in that just one of the English songs ("Bown Bown Bown") was also recorded by Hardy in a French version. It's also much superior to her album of English cover versions of just three years before, Françoise Hardy en Anglais, which was over-produced and far heavier on the syrup. --- Richie Unterberger, Rovi

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