

Portishead – Dummy (1994)

Written by bluelover

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01 - Mysterons 02 - Sour Times 03 - Strangers 04 - It Could Be Sweet 05 - Wandering Star 06 - It's a Fire 07 - Numb 08 - Roads 09 - Pedestal 10 - Biscuit 11 - Glory Box
Gary Baldwin Organ (Hammond) Geoff Barrow Drums, Fender Rhodes, Mixing, Programming
Clive Deamer Drums Beth Gibbons Vocals Andy Hague Trumpet Dave McDonald Nose
Flute Richard Newell Drum Programming, Programming Neil Solman Fender Rhodes, Organ
(Hammond) Adrian Utley Bass, Guitar, Organ (Hammond), Producer, Theremin

Portishead's album debut is a brilliant, surprisingly natural synthesis of claustrophobic spy soundtracks, dark breakbeats inspired by frontman Geoff Barrow's love of hip-hop, and a vocalist (Beth Gibbons) in the classic confessional singer/songwriter mold. Beginning with the otherworldly theremin and martial beats of "Mysterons," Dummy hits an early high with "Sour Times," a post-modern torch song driven by a Lalo Schifrin sample. The chilling atmospheres conjured by Adrian Utley's excellent guitar work and Barrow's turntables and keyboards prove the perfect foil for Gibbons, who balances sultriness and melancholia in equal measure. Occasionally reminiscent of a torchier version of Sade, Gibbons provides a clear focus for these songs, with Barrow and company behind her laying down one of the best full-length productions ever heard in the dance world. Where previous acts like Massive Attack had attracted dance heads in the main, Portishead crossed over to an American, alternative audience, connecting with the legion of angst-ridden indie fans as well. Better than any album before it, Dummy merged the pinpoint-precise productions of the dance world with pop hallmarks like great songwriting and excellent vocal performances. ---John Bush, AllMusic Review

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