John Cale – Paris 1919 (1973/2006)



Paris 1919 *1 Child's Christmas In Wales 3:20 2 Hanky Panky Nohow 2:46 3 The Endless Plain Of Fortune 4:12 4 Andalucia 3:54 5 Macbeth 3:06 6 Paris 1919 4:06 7 Graham Greene 3:00 8 Half Past France 4:19 9 Antarctica Starts Here 3:00 +*
Sketches & Roughs For Paris 1919
10 Burned Out Affair 3:24 11 Child's Christmas In Wales (Alternate Version) 3:30 12 Hanky Panky Nohow (Drone Mix) 2:51 13 The Endless Plain Of Fortune (Alternate Version) 4:08 14 Andalucia (Alternate Version) 4:34 15 Macbeth (Rehearsal) 3:34 16 Paris 1919 (String Mix) 4:29 17 Graham Greene (Rehearsal) 1:40 18 Half Past France (Alternate Version) 4:50 19 Antarctica Starts Here (Rehearsal) 2:52 20.1 Paris 1919 (Piano Mix) 4:23 20.2 (silence) 1:46 21.1 Macbeth 3:58 21.2 (silence) 1:01 21.3 Untitled 0:18
John Cale – vocals, guitar, piano, keyboards, viola Lowell George – electric & acoustic guitar Wilton Felder – bass guitar, saxophone Richie Hayward – drums Chris Thomas – tambourine The UCLA Symphony Orchestra – strings

One of John Cale's very finest solo efforts, Paris 1919 is also among his most accessible records, one which grows in depth and resonance with each successive listen. A consciously literary work -- the songs even bear titles like "Child's Christmas in Wales," "Macbeth," and "Graham Greene" -- Paris 1919 is close in spirit to a collection of short stories; the songs are richly poetic, enigmatic period pieces strongly evocative of their time and place. Chris Thomas' production is appropriately lush and sweeping, with many tracks set to orchestral accompaniment; indeed, there's little here to suggest either Cale's noisy, abrasive past or the chaos about to resurface in his subsequent work -- for better or worse, his music never achieved a similar beauty again. ---Jason Ankeny, AllMusic Review

By 1973, John Cale was 31 and had interesting career. He was responsible for the most of dissonant and unlistenable things in Velvet Underground, then produced The Stooges and worked with Nico, recorded very good album "Vintage Violence" and collaborated with Terry Riley. It was really surprising how could he nail melodies in best pop manner, and in the other moment bring some white noise. But I would never expect that, although Cale had gift for melodies, that noisy man could make an album of childhood memories, nostalgia, France, Andalucia and Graham Green. "Paris 1919" is very unusual European record. A year after releasing "Paris 1919", Kraftwerk would break out with album and single "Autobahn", and David Bowie would salute them with "European canon is here" and enter into his Berlin period. But "Paris 1919" is not that futuristic European canon. There is no electronica or synths on "Paris 1919". Music is very old fashioned (but this is not necessary bad thing) sad, quiet and turned into past and even in some rockier numbers, there is a feeling that all songs sneak to your ears. Maybe it's European answer to Americana or in other words then popular confessional troubadour country rock.

"Paris 1919" is also very aristocratic record. I can get an impression that it is a work of an old consrevative English gentleman with cylinder and tuxedo. No cheap tricks, or punky-ish sounds or some sonic aggression. It is unusual, because Cale produced The Stooges and would be produce Patti Smith. Elegance and maturity are all over the album: Cale manage to paint various pictures due to great songs, production and super sessioners, including a cult band called Little Feat. Drummer Richard Hayward shine. Producer Chris Thomas balanced sound: orchestration and rock fit complementary like hand in glove. There are lot of details which make this delicious sound cake: whispering on "Antarctica Starts Here", birds' solo on the title track, or energetic drumming and slide guitar on "Macbeth". The weakest link is Cale's voice, average and not very edgy. But anyway he is better singer than, say, Bob Dylan.

The highlights: There is no filler on this album. Songs are excellent, but title track and "Child's Christmas in Wales" (especially the organ break) catch the ear faster than the others. I don't know if the title track had been released as a single, but it really had a hit potential.

"Paris 1919" sold a few copies in 1973 but earned a cult status and the album is better with age. It is a great place to start a long friendship with music of John Cale. ---sunflower2020, sputnikmusic.com

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