Strawbs - The Broken Hearted Bride (2008)

01 The Call To Action 02 Christmas Cheer (Everything's Going To Be Alright) 03 Too Many Angels 04 The Broken Hearted Bride 05 Shadowland 06 Through Aphrodite's Eyes 07 Deep In The Darkest Night 08 You Know As Well As I 09 Everybody Knows 10 Action Replay 11 We'll Meet Again Sometime - David Cousins - vocals, guitar, keyboards - Dave Lambert - vocals, guitar - Chas Cronk - vocals, bass, guitar, keyboards - Rod Coombes - drums + - John Hawken - keyboards - Ian Cutler - Fiddle - Chas Cronk - pre-production, programming, mastering

Few bands that first rose to prominence in the late 1960s and '70s have been as prolific releasers of new material in the early 21st century as the Strawbs. The fusion of folk and progressive rock with which they established themselves remains intact on this 2008 album, with several of the members from their most highly regarded lineups remaining aboard, foremost among them of course chief singer and songwriter David Cousins. It's an accomplished if rather grim effort; even when the ominous opening track "The Call to Action" is followed by a song titled "Christmas Cheer (Everything's Going to Be Alright)," the mood hardly brightens at all, or certainly at least becomes scarcely any less somber. The title track, as foreboding as it might look on paper, is actually one of the more upbeat, hard-rocking tunes, musically at least if not lyrically. "You Know as Well as I" verges on the sunny and wistful, almost sounding like a graver Cat Stevens. Observational lyrics with a mini-vignette feel are used not infrequently, as you'd expect in a Strawbs record, but there are also more tender sentiments acknowledging the healing power of love, particularly in "Everybody Knows." --- Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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