Crystal Castles - Crystal Castles (2010)

01 Fainting Spells
02 Celestica *play*
03 Doe Deer
04 Baptism
05 Year of Silence
06 Empathy
07 Suffocation
08 Violent Dreams
09 Vietnam
10 Birds *play*
11 Pap Smear
12 Not in Love
13 Intimate
14 I Am Made of Chalk

After all of the awful shit Crystal Castles did in the wake of their success, a whole lot of people hoped their new album would be terrible. Sorry, haters: 2010's Crystal Castles improves on their (also self-titled) debut in nearly every way. The latest from the Toronto-based electro duo is reminiscent of the jump forward taken by Deerhunter between Cryptograms and Microcastle, or Fuck Buttons from Street Horrrsing to Tarot Sport. Like those acts, Crystal Castles have reconciled with their detractors instead of running from them. By staying true to themselves, they've created a more focused, propulsive, and satisfying follow-up.

Some listeners might miss the sonic shock that came from hearing the sub-zero Italo chill of "Magic Spells" sequenced next to the 8-bit electrocution of "Xxzxcuzx Me", but clashes like those wore out their welcome over the span of 16 tracks. Here, Crystal Castles embrace

continuity and broaden their dynamic range beyond the primitive loops that once constituted the foundations of their songs. The core elements of first single "Celestica", for example, are pure shoegaze, but the waves of distortion that scrape across its chorus squash any concerns that the duo has gone soft. For a band known for its harsh midrange, this record reveals a surprising amount of depth in headphones.

Crystal Castles are far more pop than before, too, which was probably an inevitable move, but hardly a bad one. Like "Celestica", "Suffocation" and "Empathy" mix fanged distortion and sparkly synths, while tracks like "Vietnam", "Not in Love", "Intimate", and the rave-tinged "Baptism" arm the record with loads of could-be singles. But despite this shift toward beauty and clarity, Crystal Castles still rip into some punishing, epileptic moments, like the distorted bass riff on "Birds" and the shredded brutality of "Doe Deer". The fluidity of the music is matched by Alice Glass' frequently manipulated vocals, a showcase for someone too often pigeonholed as a bratty screamer. She sounds at times like everything from a Leslie guitar ("Empathy") to a Cloverfield-style monster ("I Am Made of Chalk"). The obvious comparison is the Knife's Silent Shout, but where Karin Dreijer-Andersson often manipulates her voice to play characters, Glass is just as disturbing for her dehumanization.

As rewarding as this new album is, it's even more impressive when you consider its context: Crystal Castles may have come on at the tail-end of the blog-house/nu-rave/French-touch mini-rage, but they've now transcended it, moving from scene linchpin to indie stars. The reason is simple: Crystal Castles are a singular act who rarely sound like anyone other than themselves. So just as Ladytron's The Witching Hour did for electroclash in 2005, Crystal Castles seems destined to close the door on a fleeting, once-fashionable genre in the best way possible: by making an artistic leap beyond its boundaries. ---Ian Cohen, pitchfork.com

Crystal Castles – pochodzący z Toronto duet muzyczny, składający się z multiinstrumentalisty Ethana Katha oraz wokalistki Alice Glass. Crystal Castles również remiksują utwory innych wykonawców. Zespół powstał w grudniu 2003 roku jako projekt Ethana Katha. Dopiero w 2005 dołączyła do niego wokalistka, Alice Glass, nagrywając próbne partie wokalne do wcześniej przygotowanych podkładów. Pierwszy utwór z jej śpiewem – "Alice Practice", po opublikowaniu przez Ethana na MySpace (we wrześniu 2005), stał się hitem promującym muzyków. Crystal Castles 2010 album - to drugi album zespołu. Został wyprodukowany przez Ethana Katha w różnych miejscach w tym kościele w Islandii, w kabinie w północnym Ontario, garażu za opuszczonym sklepem spożywczym w Detroit, i jeden utwór nagrany w studiu w Londynie Paul "Telefony" Epworth.

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