Imelda May - Mayhem (2010)

1 Pulling the Rug
2 Psycho
3 Mayhem *play*
4 Kentish Town Waltz
5 All for You
6 Eternity
7 Inside Out
8 Proud and Humble
9 Sneaky Freak
10 Bury My Troubles
11 Too Sad to Cry
12 I'm Alive
13 Let Me Out
14 Tainted Love
15. Johnny Got a Boom Boom *play*

The Imelda May Band
* Imelda May - vocals, bodhrán
* Darrel Higham - guitars
* Al Gare - bass, double bass
* Stevew Rushton - drums, percussion
* Dave Priseman - trumpet, flugel, percussion

Guest musicians
* John Quinn - fiddle (on "Kentish Town Waltz")
* Stewart Johnson - steel guitar (on "I'm Alive")
* Olly Wilby - clarinet (on "Inside Out")
* Andy Wood - trombone (on "Inside Out")
* Dean Beresford - drums (on "Johnny Got a Boom Boom" remix)

Imelda May's sophomore album offers more of her jazzy, unabashedly catchy retro pop, so sincere and energetic it gives many 2000s pop stars a run for their money -- though May somehow underexplores the rockabilly vibe, which is her prime gimmick, after all. Not that she abandons it: the first three cuts all sport muscular, bouncy basslines and that rock & roll sleaze that complements her powerful vocals so well. There are also "Sneaky Freak" and the closers, though, admittedly, one's a remix and the other a cover of "Tainted Love," no less: a cheeky pick that gets a great tongue-in-cheek rendition here. But all in all, it feels like May just needed to get the rock out of her system and jump into other things, just because she can. Some numbers are classic restaurant jazz, so strong and sensual that, had it been the 1930s, gangsters would have been all over her, and even Roger Rabbit would be prompted to thoughts of infidelity. There is also a waltz; a take on spy movie themes; a tune that sounds almost like a funeral song (though May can't really be depressing even if she tries; she has too much vitality); and a set of country numbers, which are the least impressive of the lot, but still have a low-key allure. The bottom line is that some of the immediacy of her rockabilly jazz is lost once she goes for romance and seduction, but Mayhem is still a fresh, invigorating record that is worth picking up, no matter what your musical convictions are; it's that good. ---Alexey Eremenko, AllMusic Review

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