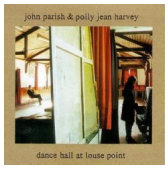
John Parish & Polly Jean Harvey - Dance Hall At Louse Point (1996)



1. Girl 2. Rope Bridge Crossing 3. City Of No Sun 4. That Was My Veil 5. Urn With Dead Flowers In A Drained Pool 6. Civil War Correspondent 7. Taut 8. Un Cercle Autour Du Soleil 9. Heela 10. Is That All There Is? 11. Dance Hall At Louse Point 12. Lost Fun Zone
Musicians: PJ Harvey - voc; Nick Harvey - org, b; John Parish - g, perc, dr

After releasing the '90s rock masterpiece To Bring You My Love, Polly Jean Harvey deflected the immense pressure of a follow-up by teaming with guitarist John Parish for this 1996 collaboration. Often mistakenly credited as an appearance on Parish's record (an artist who had never released a major-label solo record during his long career as a sideman, writer, and producer), Harvey's contribution to Dance Hall at Louse Point is at least equal to Parish's. Not only did the singer co-produce the record, she wrote all the record's lyrics and her vocal performances figure very prominently on Dance Hall at Louse Point, which was released in America on the singer's label home, Island. Artists always struggle with follow-ups to monumental records that can become bigger than the performers themselves. Harvey dealt with the pressure by releasing a record that wouldn't be recognized as her own, while she spent the customary multi-year absence after what will be remembered as her best recording. That's not to suggest that this is strictly Harvey's record either. Besides writing all the music and playing virtually every instrument, Parish displays a knack for sonic texturing that echoes Harvey's 1995 classic on tracks like "Civil War Correspondent," with its dark organ pads providing the perfect stage for Harvey's bold theatrics. Fans and critics heaping praise on To Bring You My Love producer Flood might be surprised how the Parish- and Harvey-produced "Heela" heads into its own grating, layered guitar crescendo that matches "Long Snake Moan" with its groaning vocals and relentless slide guitars. Dance Hall at Louse Point is in no way a strict duplication of Parish and Harvey's prior work together on To Bring You My Love. Listeners more appreciative of Harvey's earlier work will relish the songstress' squeals, whispers, and howls over jangling atonal guitar figures and blues motifs that recall Dry and Rid of Me. Fellow members of the Bristol music "tribe," Parish and Harvey share more than studio experience and art rock influences; they possess uncommon instinct and a genius-level connection to rock's bluesy, isolated, threatening soul. This collaboration records the artists during a time when their portal to that strange entity was at its most dilated. --- Vincent Jeffries, allmusic.com

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