



THE HAPLESS CHILD

WATT/4

words by *Edward Gorey (from 'Amphigorey')*

Robert Wyatt (voice)
Terje Rypdal (guitar)
Carla Bley (piano, clavinet, synthesizer)
Steve Swallow (bass)
Jack DeJohnette (drums)

recorded July 1975 through January 1976, Willow, NY, and England

TITLES

The Sinking Spell / The Object Lesson / The Insect God / The Doubtful Guest / The Remembered Visit / The Hapless Child

REVIEW (or something like that ...)

GOREY STORIES by *Alan Goodman (with apologies)*

*One dies of consumption, a fit or spell.
Another's bummed by an imp from hell.
They're wretched beings who please the fan
Of Edward Gorey's etched clan.*

(Lots of guitar here, gives you time to look at the queer pictures.)

*The guitar player's the conscience and soul.
The organ and bass heavily roll.
The drummer hardly worries his head.
With Gorey's existential dread.*

(That voice! Weird he get that voice?)

*Now look, here comes a mysterious composer
With quiet eyes and a mild composure.
He selects six stories, and musicians to fit
To help him make good work of it.*

(A loud part here And you can tap your foot.)

Gorey's monsters seem quite small,
They hardly fit the frame at all.
But they're all that's needed
to make one gaze
As musicians race thru Mantler's maze.
(People talk quietly in the garden just below the loudspeakers.)

Some will say the illustrations
Require no further ministrations,
But Goreyites are likely to find
These music mites can swell the mind.
(Servants are carrying off broken instruments.)

The books are popular without any song
But that doesn't make the music wrong!
Just think of it as something extra,
A hitherto unnoticed, additional texcha.
(That brute of a drummer eats guitar straps for lunch.)

Is there, besides Wyatt, a more perfect choice
To sing in Millicent Frastley's nurse's voice?
He's not your common philomel
And Miss Skrim-Pshaw never rocked so well.
(Skrim-Pshaw? Philomel? This can't be jazz!)

Trekking steadily through, Mantler's been able
To transform these horrors for the coffeetable.
They're resonant and strangely inertial,
Here's an album that's potentially commercial!
(They should sell it in bookstores And when you get home, surprise!)

Oh no, not what one quite expects
It's best to follow along with the texts.
Amphigorey it's called, and I must confess
In paperback it costs much less.
(G.P.Putnam's Sons. Fun-loving fellows.)



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(real) **REVIEWS** (more or less ...)

Unlike most contemporary music, Mantler's destroys complacency and whets appetites. His melodies, strangely, are much more hummable than comprehensible. His rhythmic anomalies underline the blandly bizarre story lines ... Wyatt's vocals are the album's crowning glory. He scats brilliantly and uniquely on "The Sinking Spell" and manages a complete metamorphosis in the awesome "The Insect God". And his thick Canterbury accent, like Gorey's original anachronistic prose and verse, lends a certain adorable whimsy. This album is a definite contender for Mutant of the Year.

- *BOSTON PHOENIX*

While Wyatt's voice, impeccably British and rational-sounding, declaims the horrors of, say, being sacrificed to giant mantids, DeJohnette is flailing away, Rypdal and Bley interject terse musical comments and Swallow's bass hums darkly ... When the band cuts loose, they produce an inspired fury of sound as intense as any I've heard since Tony Williams' first Lifetime album, "Emergency".

- *VILLAGE VOICE*
