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JOAN OF ARC

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Over the last seven years and five albums, Joan of Arc has spanned the gamut of inconsistency. On one album they could be lavished with frothy critical adoration, the next the band would be torn apart, barely understood, everything but spit upon. One album they would be lauded as one of the greatest American avant-garde / acoustic-electronic bands in years, the next they'd be misappropriated as "arty-emo." Joan of Arc was always dangerous ahead of the game, making albums that were as beautiful as they were confrontational; lush and jarring acoustic guitar tracks piled ceiling high, via Pro-Tools, atop plaintive vocals and sharp smattering of digitally edited arrangements. JOA was mixing Fahey, situationism, a Cassavetes fetish and Midwestern-winter ennui into an elaborate, seams-out fuck-it-all which was only truly consistent in that it was as compelling as it was baffling.

And, now, with this, their sixth full-length release Joan of Arc throws gives us a whole 'nother story entirely... their best album yet, two years in the making, done without a single computer.

So Much Staying Alive and Lovelessness was brought to life over the span of two laborious years, cultivated through a process entirely different from all other, past JOA works - recorded entirely in an analog studio, with a full band, this time with a meticulous focus on song writing, rather than the production. The results are tangible, obvious upon even cursory, initial listen to the album - Joan of Arc at their most unapologetically straightforward. Brightly illuminated intentions of making like a rock band, wrapped in analog warmth, honest sounds poured direct to tape. Guitars, bass, drums and Tim's distinctive vocals, all accompanied by tambourine, piano, trilling organ, occasional horns, haunting pedal steel. The buoyant, organic tone and pop-feel of the album has as much in common with mid-period Fleetwood Mac as earlier Joan of Arc work.

"The last few Joan of Arc albums, they were so reactionary in what they were trying to communicate," explains frontman/ JOA braintrust Tim Kinsella "I wanted to make albums that anyone could like, but the context of our audience became so small, so myopic. You had to have a certain record collection to understand and like Joan of Arc." Kinsella, who has above all else, been incredibly prolific - since 10th grade (1991) has been behind some of the most influential works issued in the American underground, one Cap'n Jazz album and multitude of eps (later compiled into a 2-disc retrospective on Jade Tree), five Joan of Arc albums, a solo album and EP, and recent albums fronting both Friend/Enemy and Owls. Not to mention singles, comp tracks, and one-offs. Kinsella continues, "I started playing in these other bands to get perspective, to bring back to Joan of Arc. Everything I have done up until now, agenda-wise, was all in order to get to this album, it was all leading up to here. So, essentially, it's a reaction to all of the other Joan of Arc albums," he laughs. What was the impetus for the radical change behind the new album? "I started working on this album in June of 2001, in my house, recording track upon track, on the computer, to the point where I would have four entirely different

versions of the same song. I couldn't reel it back in. I lost the idea of where it started, it was too complicated. I had to start over, break it all back down - one guitar, one vocal."

The rest of the album came into fruition entirely by accident. Longtime collaborator, Sam Zurich (Owls, Joan of Arc, Cap'n Jazz) and Friend/Enemy were both recording albums at the same studio, often on the same days, sharing much of the same line up. Kinsella explains "The line-ups on our records were about 60% identical, and yet we were making albums under different names, so we just sort of folded it all together, and it all evolved from there, into this."

Joan of Arc will be supporting the release of So Much Staying Alive and Lovelessness with extensive US and European touring through out 2003.

