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Laurel MacDonald • *Luscinia's Lullaby*
Produced by Philip Strong • Improbable Music
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What if Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, The Swingle Singers, and the Penguin Cafe Orchestra were to get together for a post-modern jam - the session, produced by, say, Amon Tobin?

Luscinia's Lullaby, the fifth CD by internationally acclaimed Canadian singer and composer Laurel MacDonald, leads one to imagine just that kind of scenario.

MacDonald has built her ten-year recording career on a production style characterized by the use of multiple layers of her voice, with eclectic instrumentation and soundscapes concocted by producer and sound designer Philip Strong. They revel in playing along musical peripheries, and juxtapose disparate elements with ingenuity and beguiling sleight of hand.

MacDonald's vocals dovetail and spiral in bewitchingly complex layers. By turns she sings with simmering intensity and wistful fragility: here, a spine-tingling invocation; there, a sleepless lullaby. From boyish soprano to husky alto; from yodels to whispers to wails.

A record to defy the tyranny of musical genre-fiction, *Luscinia's* eludes description as if the act of elusion were itself a game. A torch song rife with playful innuendo is accompanied by slithering slide guitar and liquid violins. A trippy, groove-driven polyphonic chant generates a new wave of mediaeval funkadelia. A gaggle of Venusian doo-wop girls warble and croon their way through a jubilant rhapsody. An aching lament is borne forth on shimmering triangle, vacuum hose spinning through a cloud of delay, and tube drum with undertones verging on the subsonic, conjured to resonate through your body and into your bones.

With *Luscinia's Lullaby* Laurel MacDonald and Philip Strong hurl their sonic mirror ball into the stratosphere to create a pulsing, buzzing, soaring vocal fantasia.

Perk up your earthling ears.

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