

Dan Mangan Oh Fortune

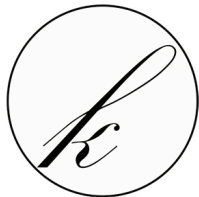
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Tracklist

1. About As Helpful As You Can Be Without Being Any Help At All
2. How Darwinian
3. Post-War Blues
4. If I Am Dead
5. Daffodil
6. Starts With Them, Ends With Us
7. Oh Fortune
8. Leaves, Trees, Forest
9. Rows Of Houses
10. Regarding Death and Dying
11. Jeopardy



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Once a mere fresh faced folk singer from Vancouver, Canada, Dan Mangan now stands at the world's doorstep. The evolution of Mangan's music is instinctively in line with its breadth and sincerity. As his art has developed, so has the story behind its constant and exponential proliferation.

The proof is in the countless European jaunts. U.S. tours with The Walkmen, Decemberists and Okkervil River. The two performances at Glastonbury. Multiple trips to Australia. NPR features, endless critical acclaim. Sold out theatres across Canada.

The 2010 Polaris Music Prize short list nomination for his sophomore album Nice, Nice Very Nice capped a stellar year in which Dan won iTunes Album of the Year in the singer songwriter category, a trio of CBC awards and was named XM The Verge Artist of the Year.

Mangan and his band experienced life-changing door openings, new challenges and wonderful opportunities across the globe. Indeed, Dan's musical passport now bears stamps from places - figurative and literal - many artists will never visit.

And so he arrived at the challenge of a new record. Oh Fortune, which itself arrives September 27 on Arts & Crafts, is a far more ambitious offering than its predecessor. A rich, textured, indie-folk(ish) statement that explores the genre's boundaries with great influence from his band, which pushed Dan beyond his comfort zone sonically, even as he dug deeper within himself.

"The sound has been stretched in different directions by the players and how they've warped my mind over the last few years," Dan admits, adding, "I always simply aimed to surround myself with people who were creatively inspiring."

These players include free-jazz experimentalists Gord Grdina (guitar), Kenton Loewen (drums) and the inimitable John Walsh (bass), as well as a near orchestra that helped shape the production. There was also a ringer call to Seattle's Eyvind Kang (Bill Frisell, Beck, Mike Patton, Marc Ribot) who helped write the lush arrangements on Oh Fortune.

"And yet with all of this amazing musical influence, I feel like lyrically and song-wise it's more me than anything I've ever done."

Produced by Colin Stewart (Black Mountain, Cave Singers) at The Hive in Vancouver, Oh Fortune still shines with those key Mangan components - the gravelly voice, that basic human element - but this time, it comes with a more mature perspective on creative intuitiveness that can only come from years of teeth-cutting.

"The last record did far more than I or anyone else thought it would... I felt like we stumbled by accident onto something that people liked. I feel now that if we tried to recreate something that already worked, I wouldn't like it... and then they wouldn't like it either," Dan muses, "it has to be sincere, and relevant, and whatever we're feeling right now."

That sentiment is mirrored on Oh Fortune tracks like its closer, "Jeopardy," which addresses social borders and the walls we build, both real and imagined.

Written on the road, where Dan lived for the majority of the last three years, these new songs tackle bold new subject matter, playing on themes of societal manipulation, soldier shell-shock and urban sprawl with tracks like "How Darwinian," "Rows Of Houses" and "Post War Blues."

Currents of mortality, isolation, and desperation run through the album, and yet its title comes from Dan's reflection of a ticker-tape parade celebrating the return of Gertrude Ederle to the United States in 1926. For a heartbeat, she was the country's biggest celebrity. She had just become the first woman to swim the English Channel, and simultaneously the new world record holder (previously held by a man).

There exists in Oh Fortune this chaos of juxtaposition. It could be taken as a sad or dark album, yet musically it kicks with more ferocity and tenacity than people may expect from Mangan. It debates melancholy while it anticipates incredible moments of glory and victory. It's not sad, it's simply honest. Life is just that.

The result is an album void of predictability, that is distinctively Dan Mangan, infused with his wit and personality, yet completely distinguished from everything prior. Simply stated, Oh Fortune makes good on the promise of every song Dan's ever written, while setting a new standard for every song he's yet to write.

To be sure, this release marks the arrival of a new voice, with world class charm and a universal appeal. Oh fortune, indeed.