

“One of the top 10 albums released in Canada this year.”

- Matt Tunnacliffe, Definitely Not the Opera, CBC Radio, Dec. 2001

EXCLAIM! MAGAZINE

Concert Review, Winnipeg Folk Festival 2003

“Possibly the best thing to come out of Winnipeg in a while, Nathan played wonderfully each time they graced the stage..”

- Stacey Abramson, Aug. 2003

OTTAWA CITIZEN

Stranger ★★★★★
Nathan (Independent)

Winnipeg quartet Nathan crafts delicate pop wrapped in acoustic instrumentation and bewitching melodies.

The album opens with the lurching tune *Measure Me*, giving some indication of the disc’s overall subversive tone. Songwriters Keri McTighe (guitarist/vocalist) and Shelley Bilewitch (guitar, accordion and back-up vocals) create a perverse blend of sweet and sour.

The mix is at its sharpest on *Pick Me Up Suzie*, which seems to be about the forensic investigation of a murder told from the perspective of the victim. McTighe’s vocals are so soothing that the grisly lyrics (“Tell my daddy how I cried when Johnny pulled out his knife/and daddy wraps blankets on his chewed-up daughter”) will cause a double-take.

Actually, this whole album will provoke double-takes.

- Wes Smiderle, November 2002

Keri McTighe and Shelley Bilewitch have the most bewitching vocal styles. High and some kind of old 30s country, but with a pop cadence, some circus melodies, and the pretty-beyond-sweetness of a Bjork. It’s hard to find the highest point in a CD of highlights. Even when they slow it down to a Cat Power-shuffle (“Meritte”) on a song that ends with “like a fairy tale cut short like a young girl’s grave” Nathan is completely compelling. Imagine Julie Doiron and the Carter Family jamming with gypsy band Taraf de Haidouks. That isn’t quite it. You’d have to add some Geoff Berner, Freakwater, and John Southworth to get closer to approximating their sound. Despite the vocals being so high and dreamlike, the rest of the band isn’t lost in a washy pop sound. The drums are crisp and the accordion doesn’t compete with the piano for attention. The music is dense, but not cluttered, and sometimes it’s breathtakingly appropriate. It has the sound of a veteran band, not the independently produced debut by a young Winnipeg five-some. I thought my excitement would wane, that their uniqueness would wither, but the more I listen to this CD the broader the pleasure. That first line of “Ballyhoo” surprises me every time. “Glorious Exhaust” is divine.

This should be on many top 10 lists for the year. 5/5

Gabino Travassos, Mote Magazine, Edmonton, AB.

September 6, 2001 UPTOWN



★★★★
**Nathan
Stranger
(Independent)**

The debut CD from Winnipeg’s Nathan is a lovingly crafted musical delight. *Stranger* immediately pulls the listener in with the gentle oom-pah-pah of the first track, “Measure Me,” and weaves a hypnotic spell from there on in with its loping and laid-back folky/country pop. Intriguing twists of wispy girl vocals and sweet harmonies contrast with sometimes startlingly harsh lyrics nuanced with violence, longing and discovery. These, coupled with excellent musicianship and interesting instrumentation (accordion is an important player and there’s even a bit of tuba for good measure) elevate *Stranger* well above the ranks of debut CDs, showing a maturity that one wishes most bands would achieve before releasing a disc. There are beautiful songs and moving stories here that deserve to be heard, and with one listen you’ll be bewitched.

Barb Stewart

**This Year’s Best
Georgia Straight,**

Vancouver, BC, Dec 2002

**“The young
Winnipeg Quartet
fearlessly crosses
styles and genres
and comes up with
winners in just about
everything it tries...”**

-Shawn Conner