

I'm just going to come right out and say this: Rainbow Bridge is up and away my favorite Fire-Toolz album yet, bar none. Angel Marcloid has been drawing an intricate web over the years, with dozens of monikers and projects, various experiments in genre, and a growing mythology of symbols mapping out her spiritual online vision. But with Rainbow Bridge, she's finally tied all the threads together. Revolving around the passing of her beloved cat Breakfast, Rainbow Bridge is a heartbroken, questioning work, confronting the existential search for peace that's always been the heart of Fire-Toolz's music, all while offering some her most twisting, emotional songs yet.

Immediately, the album kicks off with a dose of pure blastbeat hell, the purest metalcore Marcloid has ever pulled off, before suddenly leveling up into an epic Rush-style prog overture. From there, Rainbow Bridge just keeps winding down hallways; "It's Now Safe to Turn Off Your Computer" never seems to settle on one key, bouncing along on shimmering adult-contemporary synths before diving into an extended passage of glitch as hellish as it is blissed out. Marcloid's voice is constantly being transformed: On "ṬMegoṽ ≡ Maitrī," it sounds like it's being ground up into a sticky paste while synthetic choral pads hover above. The magic of Marcloid's music is how she contrasts the ugly with the heavenly, creating an equal plane where her frenzied tastes can live together in harmony.

This may not be the first time Marcloid has blended soft jazz, harsh noise, vaporwave, and nü-prog into a strange smoothie of styles, but the songs here stand as some of her most melodic, outwardly beautiful creations to date. I've probably listened to "(((Ever-Widening Rings)))" more than any other song this year; Marcloid's shrieked vocals shouldn't make sense on a slow-riding '80s smooth jam like this, and yet it feels like gliding through the clouds with a demonic guardian by your side. It's disorienting, yes, but in Marcloid's hands it simply couldn't sound any other way. I'd say that this is Marcloid's masterpiece, but so far she's managed to just keep on topping herself. Who knows how high she can go.

-Sam Goldner/Samuel Zane's Emporium Of Delights

(Review has been removed from the interwebs)