

- On my journey to find the best synth pop grooves and funkier disco beats, I stumbled upon "Going Up" and instantly fell in love. Retro in all the best ways, and filled front to back with infectious dance numbers, it's an album I've had on repeat for weeks

- "Message From The Stars" is a powerhouse of a lead single. From that first synth bass drop you know you're in for something special, and it's a bassline that carries the track. Liz Hewson's singing brings a playful energy, but it's the distorted effects on her vocals that really stand out. It's present over the whole album and I'm not sure if it's an intentional choice or a recording mistake, because it gives the whole album a dusty, amateurish feel. "Roll Me Down To Rio" doesn't feature Liz, but it allows the rest of the band to really flex their talents and provides an energetic highlight in the tracklist. Dramatic horns and funky synth lines provide some great bombastic melodies, and the song's 6+ minute runtime allows them to go on some fun detours with the percussion in the back half. The vocoded singing is a ton of fun, even better knowing that Daft Punk would build one of the best albums of the 2000s off this very effect 20 years later

- Liz continues to have standout moments throughout the album, but generally leans in a more sensual direction. "Perfumed Garden" does a lot with its bossa-nova foundation, as synths and string flourishes glide alongside it. Liz sounds weightless in her delivery, as if she could whisk us away to a better world at any moment. She shines even brighter on "Sam The Samba Man", a song with a chorus so good I keep hearing it in my sleep: "Sam the samba man, I live in samba land. Sam the samba man, catch me if you can". The sequenced drums and high-pitched synths lean even further into the album's sometimes unpolished sound, but with how in vogue the "lo-fi" aesthetic is these days, it's aged incredibly well

- The first half is just a touch stronger than the back half, but there's still some strong cuts. "Tears & Rain" is the album's sole heartbreak number, with a subdued dance beat and Liz singing with a sadder, delicate delivery. I really like how the song plays out, with an acoustic guitar and sax solo breaking up the track's melancholy pop grooves. "Party Games" goes full disco, with what might be a different female vocalist? Her delivery is more soul-influenced, almost giving Diana Ross. The backing vocals are great, and it has an earnestly cheesy chorus

- It can be surprisingly hard to find good disco/synthpop records from this era, since it was the remixable club singles that were the real moneymakers, but "Going Up" is consistently stellar! It's nearly an hour long, and rarely does it let up. A highlight in the disco genre that shouldn't be missed