

Rachel Grimes Book of Leaves Review

Album. Released 12 October 2009.

Discography information comes from MusicBrainz. You can add or edit information about Book of Leaves at musicbrainz.org.



Tracks

- 1 Long Before Us
- 2 Every Morning
- 3 The Corner Room
- 4 She Was Here
- 5 On the Morrow
- 6 My Dear Companion
- 7 Far Light
- 8 Mossgrove
- 9 Bloodrot
- 10 At the Pond
- 11 Starwhite
- 12 The Side View
- 13 Every Morning, Birds
- 14 Bed of Moss

BBC Review

Pioneering neo-classicist reveals her solo debut.

Spencer Grady 2009-10-13

We owe Rachel Grimes big. With a proliferation of neo-classicists now banging on the eardrums of indie kids everywhere, it's easy to forget the impact her chamber music ensemble, *Rachel's*, made on the guitar-dominated dominions of alternative music in the mid-90s. Arguably, without her and the group to which she lent her name, artists like [Max Richter](#), [Jóhann Jóhannsson](#) and even [Sigur Rós](#) would not have found such a wide and receptive audience.

Heavily influenced by [Erik Satie](#) and [Michael Nyman](#), Grimes' piano playing gave the group's debut, 1995's *Handwriting*, an air of authenticity, helping to fend off the naysayers accusing the Louisville troupe of crossover dilettantism. But it was only with *Music for Egon Schiele*, released a year later, that Grimes found the conviction and confidence to match her voice, the solemnity of her instrument leading the sombre tributes to the controversial Austrian painter. The breathtaking vignettes that comprised that work were deftly-delivered minimalist expressions, impressionistic rather than melodic, full of heartbreaking decays and intimate focus on the timbre of a solitary note.

It is an approach that Grimes resurrects on her enchanting solo debut, *Book of Leaves*. Her most wondrous gift was always her ability to paint the most evocative pictures in purest ivory and her lightness of touch allows majestic statements such as *The Corner Room* and *Long Before Us* to ring out, echoing with sensuousness and sentiment before drawing the listener back in. Occasionally she attempts to augment her creations with unfussy field recordings, such as the avian choruses that weave between delicate ivory droplets on *She Was Here* and *Every Morning, Birds*, but these seem like merely tokenistic distractions. Grimes' performances are standalone strong throughout and any accompaniment is really just so much side salad.

It's only with the album's longest piece, the almost Charlemagne Palestine-esque like shimmer of *Mossgrove*, that the album's fragile spell is almost broken. But it's a momentary diversion and a distinctive tributary which ably demonstrates Grimes' growing versatility and development as an artist. *Book of Leaves* is simply an absorbing turn from a true pioneer.



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