

The Radio Makers "Lucky Stars" Rocks And Bops With A Glammy Swagger In Its Step

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Bristol's The Radio Makers are daring to ignite a New New Wave Of New Wave

At the end of the day I have to admit that I was tempered in a cauldron New Wave. That was the wide-ranging sound that maybe stood a step or two apart from Post-Punk and formed tighter bonds with the charts I had grown up with. While I loved keyboards and particularly synths, for me they work best when juxtaposed against olde fashioned bass, guitar, and drums. When synths came to dominate moving forward in the Synthpop era that immediately followed the late 70s heyday of New Wave, quite honestly, I felt that something was a bit lost. Then came drum machines and I can look back and say that when Pop and Rock music [as opposed to Dance music] was considered, it was a step in the wrong direction.

Fortunately, there will always be some bands willing to pick up the discarded pieces of Rock's vast tapestry to have another go at things. The Radio Makers from Bristol are one such band, and their new album "Lucky Stars" has managed to hone in on that 1978-1979 zeitgeist where Glam, Power Pop, and even the more morose strains of Post-Punk were roiling in a genre-mashing vortex of musical energy that only cared about our satisfaction.



Radio Makers | UK | CD | 2023

The Radio Makers: *Lucky Stars [Got My Radio]* – UK – CD [2023]

- Edible Hearts
- Echoes
- Jo Jo
- Song For Rainy Afternoons
- Girl Who Looks Like You
- I'm A Poseur
- Lucky Stars
- Where Gave All The Flowers Gone
- I'm A Tribute [To Myself]
- Talk About You

Our journey began with the zippy Pop-Rock of "Edible Hearts" where the bass and guitar interplay set the pace with a slick reverse echo hook on the chorus. Ian McKenna took the instrumental middle eight on his guitar most capably. With "Echoes" I was immediately won over by a great foundational synth pulse framed guitars, bass, and pin-sharp drumming from Keith McKenna to crackle with an effervescent energy given a boost by his expert fills.

It was time for a change of pace, and "Jo Jo" was a compassionate and haunting look at a women on the margins while the slower methodical pace of the song allowed for the poignance of the piano to carry the melody to the place where dreams were lost. As the anguished tone of the guitar solo on the middle eight made abundantly clear.

"Song For Rainy Afternoons" kicked the energy levels of the album back to normal with the urgency of its attack as an example of the anti-love song. I really enjoyed the petulant tone of vocalist Andy Madison on the "needle and thread" middle eight before ramping back up to end the song on a protracted, sustained chord that ultimately went to intriguing places in the vivid coda.

If you ever wanted to know what would have been the result if you had thrown The Sweet in a blender with Suede then look no further than the electric single "I'm A Poseur!" As the massive backbeat and handclap hook made abundantly clear from the word "go." But I can't remember The Sweet having tarpit bass lines like what B G Mulcahy-Bowman brought to the table here.

The saucy synths from Steve Evans added yet more hooks [by way of "Funkytown"] to the perfect storm of swaggering Glamrok that the band was so obviously aiming for and hitting *dead on*. With a music bed this perfect, it remained for the lyric to seal the deal, and that it did with snide, rakish aplomb. I simply *can't imagine* a better single than this.

*Somehow, someway,
I've gotta make it big
someday
Here now but gone soon,
First class travel all the way
to the moon
I've got the hair, I've got the
moves,
With looks like these I just
can't lose
I've got the clothes, I've got
the tunes,
I'm on my up to the front of
the queue*

"I'm A Poseur"

After that Atomic Bomb of Pop, the title track offered a wealth of percussive detail that contrasted beautifully with the ragged tremolo guitar of McKenna. And it still found time for a backbeat that went for miles as it shifted gears all the way to the cold ending. The pensive pop of "Where Have All The Flowers Gone" dared to lift the title if not vibe of the Kingston Trio tune of 1961. The splendid melody of the chorus managed to put the erstwhile Folkies very much in the shade.

The short, sharp, spiky vibe of "I'm A Tribute [To Myself]" to myself crackled with the sort of energy that fit like a glove in the penultimate slot on the album. Giving us another helping of the cheeky egoism that "I'm A Poseur" also proffered; tongue in cheek. Then the surprising finale of "Talk About You," with its orchestral pads and string patches evoking, well... *Enya* comes to mind, for an unexpectedly soulful finish for this somewhat arch album. Hey, it worked for Ziggy Stardust! The arrangement here gave keyboardist Steve Evans plenty of room to take the feeling where it needed to go for this redemptive conclusion to the album.

"Lucky Stars" drops tomorrow and is still in pre-order on the band's Bandcamp page. Tomorrow at 2:00 PM EDT there will be a [listening party on Bandcamp](#) if you would like to hear more. The group have crafted a succinct, 10-track album that would have flown beautifully in 1978 as indeed, it's still does today. They are not going to waste our time with filler and producer Steve Evansson [Siouxsie] hits all the right buttons in making this album the spiritual heir to Chinnichap as well as The Only Ones.

In addition to the DL on Bandcamp [a pittance at £8.00] there will also be LPs and CDs for the tangible persuasion. And the band will be having an album release party at the Hen + Chicken in their native Bristol on Saturday, August 5th among their tour dates below. I see that all is well with the band supporting The Vapors early next year. I can't imagine a more appropriate pairing.