Artist: Caribou

<http://www.caribou.fm/>

Album: *Swim*

Label: Merge

<http://www.mergerecords.com/>

File under: Electronic/experimental

Summary:

Caribou, who drew international attention in 2008 with his Polaris Prize-winning *Andorra*, entices you to have a listen and a dance break with his latest release, *Swim*.

Review:

Daniel Victor Snaith has outdone himself.

Snaith is the man behind Caribou, whose latest release, *Swim*, is a perfect mix of dark dance beats and songs mourning unrequited love. Five of the album’s nine tracks are over five minutes long, but the trance-inducing numbers don’t seem drawn out. Snaith’s soft voice lures you in, while strong percussion keeps you moving to the beat.

The album’s opening track, “Odessa,” was released as a free download on January 25, making it an early underground hit. This song sets the stage for a story of scorned lovers and a man trying to understand his place in his relationships and in the world. Lyrics tell of an exhausted narrator who is torn by his ambivalent emotions; the story is sad, but the music insists you keep holding on. Words like the following are rife throughout the record:

“And I’ve been with you, for all of these years

Tell you what I’ve got to show for all of my tears

The times you hurt me, and treated me wrong

Something had to give to stop this thing from going on.”

Much of *Swim*’s intrigue comes from the vast variety of instruments incorporated in the album. Standard electronic synth is prevalent on every track, but many songs also feature timpani, oboe, saxophone, violin, and something reminiscent of the ancient ocarina. These seemingly incongruous sounds help create the addictive backbeat that begs you to dance to this album in the dark.

Besides “Odessa,” other key tracks include “Kaili,” which continues to hold the focus on the unnamed female object of desire: “She can hold onto her own/If it comes to push and shove/She has kept a lookout on/Over what’s left of their love.” The fifth track, “Bowls,” has no words, instead falling back on the tribal beats characteristic of most songs off *Swim*.

In short, Caribou’s latest release leaves nothing to be desired. Its multiple dance-encouraging tracks are interspersed with gentler ones that are just as appealing, making it a record no self-respecting electronica fan should go without.

*Swim* will be released in North America via Merge on April 19, 2010. You can hear this album on rotation at WVUM, 90.5 FM.