

Brainwashed - Virna Lindt, "Shiver"

Written by Duncan Edwards

Sunday, 08 July 2007 18:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 July 2007 21:01



This reissue (from 1983) is something of a gem. Virna Lindt's music is a blend of fashion and espionage as perfect as if she were the love-child of Emma Peel from *The Avengers* and Ilya Kuryakin from *The Man From U.N.C.L.E*

[LTM](#)

The illusion that Virna Lindt perpetrates is circular: Swedish translation student pretending to be a jet-set model revealed as a spy masquerading as a singer (and so on). Visually, her fabulous appeal is that of a Gerry & Sylvia Anderson prototype action doll come to life and gone undercover, maybe one of the Angel fighter pilots from the *Captain Scarlet* series. All that would be mere pap if the music didn't add up to more than an exercise in style. But, after a quarter of a century, the simple integrity of the arrangements and her unruffled vocal style deserve to be brought in from the cold.

Paradoxically, "Attention Stockholm," the story of a secret agent who has disappeared, announced Virna Lindt to the world (she topped the independent charts in the UK); her lovely but distant face adorned the music papers. The track still sounds smart, urgent, and alluring. Puns on the words "cologne" and "scent" are particularly sweet, but a creeping frantic edge keeps a great single in balance. The title track to *Shiver* proves that few things work as well as a mysterious beauty muttering in a foreign tongue. The track makes great use of an echo halfway between a gunshot and the sound of a glacier cracking.

"Pillow Talk" exudes an aroma which brings to mind the exploits of the John Profumo Affair, when the erotic stink of Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies brought several government ministers to their knees in more ways

Brainwashed - Virna Lindt, "Shiver"

Written by Duncan Edwards

Sunday, 08 July 2007 18:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 July 2007 21:01

than one. Lindt proclaims that she doesn't believe in love (or) lies anymore, but anyone hearing her coo "All the president's men won't come between us" is likely to join the line of her admirers no matter what secrets she might extract. The restrained use of a sound that is more whip than handclap adds to the atmosphere. "Swedish Modern" is all reversed tapes and references to the Scandinavian furniture that was popular in the UK when *Shiver* was first released. "I Beat the System" could be mistaken for the continental piano-playing pen-pal of the Waterboys' "A Girl Called Johnny", while "The Dossier on Virna Lindt" is a leisurely stroll through deserted streets reading her answers to a teen-magazine questionnaire ("Leisure activities: Sabotage and sin").

The short instrumental "Episode One" begins with frozen synth emerging like a boat from fog until another bubbling layer adds an element of emotion, suggesting arrival or departure. The track was originally the perfect B-side for the "Attention Stockholm" 7" single from 1981. Although I personally find "Underwater Boy" as syrupy as *real* disco, it predicts the homage that is Air's

Moon Safari

by a couple of decades. In the bonus section, this CD reissue includes an ever-so-slightly warped cover of "The Windmills of Your Mind" from the soundtrack of

The Thomas Crown Affair

On *Shiver*, Virna Lindt takes one idea to a perfect conclusion with tremendous grace and a good humor that never goes over-the-top. Co-conspirator Tot Taylor (who just happened to be a record producer) is said to have met her on a train and responded to her desire to make music that was "like Hitchcock with a rock and roll beat"; though presumably, if her desire had been to rob a bank, he would likely have found some guns and a book on safecracking pretty quickly. Taylor and Lindt remixed and repackaged the album in 1997, and it sounds as playfully aloof as ever, Lindt's icy mystique unthawed by time. *Shiver* harks back to a fun time when tiny labels like

The

Brainwashed - Virna Lindt, "Shiver"

Written by Duncan Edwards

Sunday, 08 July 2007 18:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 July 2007 21:01

Compact Organisation

looked like they could rule the world of pop. If only,...

samples:

- [Attention Stockholm](#)
- [Episode One](#)
- [Shiver](#)