

TRIPPING DAISY – “THE TOPS OFF OUR HEAD”

Tripping Daisy’s songwriting process has always begun with improvisation, finding “moments” when the musicians have created a particularly moving piece of music. These moments are then organized and constructed into a complete and satisfying song. In finding that some of these moments can not be recreated, the wish has always been to have a quality recording of the music exactly as it was created.

The Tops Off Our Head is an intimate look at the foundation of this songwriting process. Although a project of this nature could easily become nothing more than a mediocre compromise of each musician’s musical tastes, The Tops Off Our Head is a clear example of five individuals working with a specific vision of how music should sound.

Composed of five improvised pieces and two songs that were arranged beforehand (Never My Love, a song by the Association, who have been a large source of inspiration for the band, and the final song that was recorded within the hour of its conception) the EP is organized into a sound collage, with all the parts combined into a single twenty two minute and four second track. Although a few overdubs have been added (mainly backing vocals on the first section, and the “Cheap” section) the five improvisations sound exactly as they did when first played.

The hallmark of this recording is Tim DeLaughter’s unique ability to improvise a melody, lyrics and all, and still create the vivid imagery, which is present in his other recorded efforts.

- Section 1 (0:00-2:48) is a driving and uplifting song. It contains overdubs of backing vocals and tambourine.
- Section 2 (2:48-6:17) is heard exactly as it was first played. Their lyrics are some of the best of the recordings, and Tim can also be heard calling out chord changes throughout the section.
- Section 3 (6:17-8:24) is the most heavily edited of the sections, with the section opening with the band slipping into a more melancholy feeling, stopping abruptly with a small loop from the Association’s “Cherish”, lasting for four measures. The song then creeps back into the earlier part, and is then mixed in with a later, more raucous section followed with Phil Karnats playing with a grape slurpee.
- Section 4 (8:24-10:36) was recorded when the band was notified that there was only two minutes length of recording tape left. This song also contains added backing vocals, with the singers clapping their hands at the introduction. The earlier Association loop is then revisited, introduction...
- Section 5 (10:36-14:05) Never My Love

- Section 6 (14:05-17:55) Tripping Daisy gliding through another emotionally stimulating piece which is heard as it was first played, beginning to end.
- Section 7 (17:55-22:04) While this song is not improvised, it was recorded very shortly after it was created. Very lighthearted, it is a very pleasant and memorable way to end this listening experience.

Wes Berggren, Benjamin Curtis, Tim DeLaughter, Philip E Karnts, Mark Pirro

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Liner notes by Benjamin Curtis

Photo by Jennie Kelley