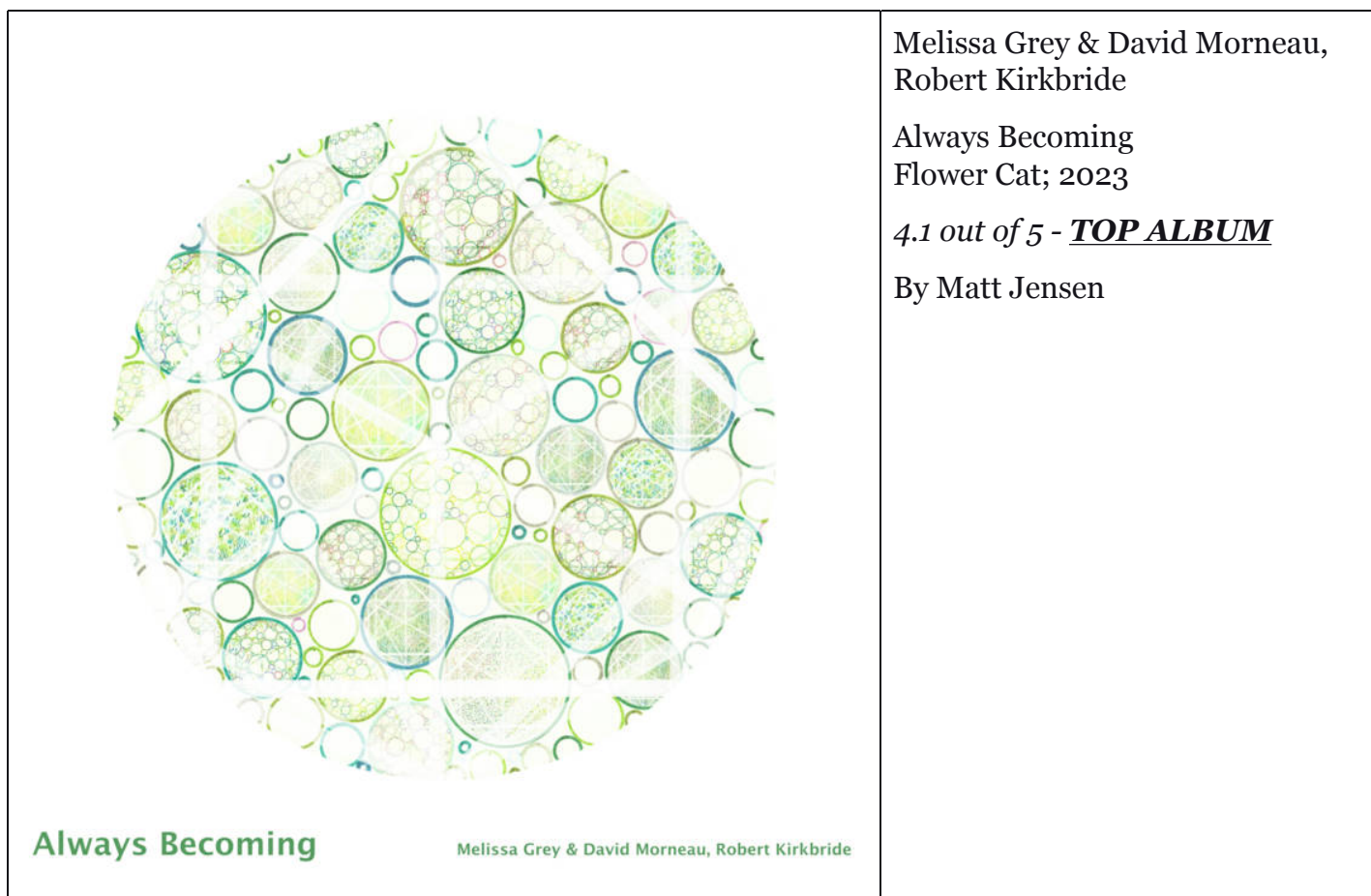


Melissa Grey & David Morneau, Robert Kirkbride - Always Becoming

Critique/insight



Melissa Grey & David Morneau,
Robert Kirkbride

Always Becoming
Flower Cat; 2023

4.1 out of 5 - **TOP ALBUM**

By Matt Jensen

Melissa Grey (theremin/guitar feedback), David Morneau (trombone) and Robert Kirkbride's (guitars) recent release *Always Becoming* is a four-song EP that combines unique textures and colors in a cohesive loop. I happen to love EP's or albums that do this kind of thing. In this case I thought they executed this beautifully. The cohesion between the songs is so seamless it rivals some of the best ambient releases I have heard. On that note although this release doesn't have a lead instrument I feel like classifying this music ambient doesn't quite capture it.

The first song is entitled "Being." You are greeted with delicate guitar picking which grabbed most of my attention. There are other elements that create a light and airy atmosphere. Everything feels subtle but ever moving. The attention to detail was impressive. It's also fluid. The first significant change comes around the two-minute mark into this almost techno beat. It starts to feel cosmic and alien and I was reminded of Aphex Twin in some regards.

“Always” feels like a natural extension of “Being.” The guitar pattern is similar but different elements are accompanied yet still feel like they are part of the same palette. As the song progresses it grooves because it is more stabilized with ascending parts and syncopated trombone parts. It feels ethereal and ephemeral.

“Ever” changes the mood slightly into perhaps a more pensive and melancholy mood. At the same time there’s a relaxing serenity to the music. Some of the sounds mimic the feeling of being in a mythical forest. That was at least the image that kept popping up in my mind’s eye.

The most dynamic piece is the last one entitled “Becoming.” It’s also the most ambitious piece of music. I was reminded of bands like Mogwai and Local Natives on this song. The percussion is most prevalent here. There are some incredible grooves on this song and I loved the way they utilized builds which were not overly predictable crescendos. The song comes to a satisfying conclusion and I immediately felt like this was such a seamless experience.

As I was listening to the EP I was looking at some of the beautiful artwork that was created by Robert Kirkbride. It’s a visual aid in some sense that connects you deeper into the music. I loved the aesthetics of this whole experience. It’s undeniable art that has an ineffable quality but makes sense at the same time. I do recommend listening to this on a hi-fi system to truly capture all those details that make up so much of this work.

I thought this was an exceptional EP that was able to present ambient and experimental sensibilities in an accessible way. Highly recommended.