



**Parenthetical Girls**  
**Entanglements**  
**Tomlab**

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Continuing the baroque revival with lush orchestral arrangements, perverse lyrics and a hodgepodge of eclectic instrumentation comes Parenthetical Girls third LP 'Entanglements'. Ripe with snatches of verse and vocal phrasing referencing pop's credibly melodic lunatic fringe (from Kate Bush to the Smiths), the Girls' album is an intricate, if occasionally overloaded, enterprise. It's as though someone sat frontman Zac Pennington down and told him he had one final stab at an album, and in terror he threw a career full of instrumental experimentation behind his Conor Oberst meets Travis Morrison falsetto.

'Entanglements' over the top production is simultaneously it's greatest strength and weakness. At its best, as on the dreamy pederastic ballad 'Avenue of Trees', or the multipliciously referential 'Song for Ellie Greenwich', or on Pennington's wonderful reimagining of Michel Legrand chamber pop staple 'Windmills of Your Mind' 'Entanglements' is a candy coloured clown tumbling through conceptually driven lyrics and multigenre medleys with knowing delight. But where it falls down, as on the Dresden Dolls style dirge 'Abandoning', or the Fiona Apple-ish overwritten 'Gut Symmetries', the album can seem top heavy and cloying in a way that eschews the unpretentious evocativeness of the best of its precursors. That said, 'Entanglements' is an intriguingly dense listen, highly recommended for the Jon Brion / Andrew Bird retinue, and fans of perverse, delicious, instrumental pop everywhere.

***Gareth Stack***