

REVIEWS

CAMERA OBSCURA

*Desire Lines*

[4AD]

Perhaps unfairly, Camera Obscura have always been lumped in with the other jangly indie-pop bands from their hometown of Glasgow. On their fifth album, the group seizes an opportunity to carve out their own identity, moving away from the kinds of vibrant string arrangements so prominent on their previous releases. While “I Missed Your Party” has shades of the orchestral charm and brass-band camp that—like hand-wringing tweeness—have come to define the band, *Desire Lines* finds the group trying different sounds. There are surf-pop vibes and weedy organs to replace the jettisoned strings, and there are even guest vocals from Neko Case and Jim James of My Morning Jacket. While the closing title track—a bright, chilled-out alt-country tune—may seem like an odd note to end on, it suggests a promising new direction. After all, if you’re going to nix your trademark violins, why not replace them with pedal steel? —Amanda Farah

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