

Remembering the

# CARPENTERS



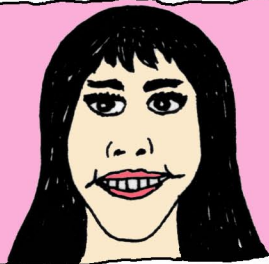
Most people probably have never even heard of the Carpenters' first album. It's called *Offering*. The cover is real strange. Karen and Richard look like they're in a cemetery or something. And their hair looks so GREASY on the back photo.

*On the day that you were born the angels got together and decided to create a dream come true...*

My first exposure to the band was, of course, *Close to You*. The song was phenomenally popular when it came out and yet it seemed totally out of place with everything else on Top 40 radio. Even people who didn't like soft music seemed to be drawn in by the magical spell of the Carpenters.



From that point forward, it seemed to me that Richard was pulling the strings in the band's career. He must have known what he was doing. Carpenters music became very, VERY popular.



Who could ever forget Karen Carpenter's smooth, sincere vocals on all the monster hits? *Rainy Days and Mondays*, *Yesterday Once More*, *For All We Know*, and *Hurting Each Other* are just a few of her shining moments.



Oh MAN...  
the Carpenters  
**SUCK!**

They're  
too CLEAN!  
and GOOD!



After the first dozen hits, there was a sudden, strange backlash against what the Carpenters were doing. People began shunning them for being too sweet, good, and wholesome. Never mind that this was their image in the first place.



Of course, you have to blame Richard Carpenter for over-using the same old tried and true formula that made the Carpenters famous. Virtually ever record featured the same luscious strings and overdone backing vocals that epitomized their first recordings. The public began to tire of their heroes.



One thing that has always bugged me was how people made light of the fact that Karen Carpenter could play drums and sing at the same time...insinuating that this was an easy feat. Have you ever tried it? Take my word for it...it's VERY difficult!

By the time the news came out that Karen had anorexia, I had pretty much lost interest in the Carpenters' music. I was into harder, more 'adult' things. Like everyone else, though, I was shocked at the news. To me, Karen Carpenter's death pretty much brought anorexia into public consciousness.



Then the jokes started. Everyone and their brother seemed to think that Karen's death was hilarious. Beautiful, gifted Karen...who died in such an unusual manner. People in the music community found it especially amusing and it became 'cool' to make fun of Karen's death. I myself was even guilty of such treason at the time...because I felt I had outgrown the Carpenters.

About a year ago, I began listening to the Carpenters again and collecting their records I had never heard before. Much to my surprise, they sounded better than EVER. What arrangements! What incredible vocal harmonies! Why, the band practically single-handedly created a new niche in popular music!

*We've only just begun...  
Sing... sing a song...*

*Talking to myself and feeling low...  
Sometimes it takes the strength of a woman...*




Throughout the ups and downs of her career, I genuinely feel that Karen had one of the most beautiful voices in popular music. If you don't believe me, go back and listen to her now. The richness and sincerity of her voice just oozes off every groove on every record. When I hear her sing now I get chills...

Karen...wherever you are! I miss you. I'm sorry I deserted you. You are still the reigning queen of soft pop. To me, you are a GODDESS. Your work is still appreciated. Your death was a tragedy. And your memory will live on FOREVER.

*Stievet*