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Circular breathing (Kate Miller-Heidke)

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Circular Breathing
Kate Miller-Heidke
Waterbear Records 82876842512
distributed by Sony BMG Entertainment (Australia)

reviewed by Michael Hannan

This six-tracker includes three songs by the singer-songwriter Kate Miller-Heidke and three by her guitarist, Keir Nuttall. With her previous EP, Miller-Heidke had already had some success with her song "Space They Cannot Touch" achieving high rotation on Triple J. Miller-Heidke has an appealing voice and she sings expressively. Her songs are piano-based with subtle arrangements using acoustic guitar, bass, light drums and violin (the latter used particularly inventively). Her lyrics are quirky, witty and poetic, although not always constructed in a way that makes for fluid setting to music. "Out and In" is reflective exploration of a relationship where the partner is very self-centred; "Apartment" uses a high-rise metaphor ("people over me, under me") to explore the singer's anxiety that her lover might "get over her"; and "Caveman Days" is a nostalgic homage to the simplicity of living in hunter-gatherer times, but as a punch-line the songwriter amusingly casts doubt on her bloke's potential as a hunter. The cheeky humour and wordplay complement the gentle and stylish musical backing.