

**Imogen Heap**  
*"Speak for Yourself"*  
RCA Records

Imogen Heap — or as you might know her, the voice of Frou Frou — would just be as wonderful to listen to without all the electronic goings-on that she plunks her beautiful voice down in on her latest solo effort. Put her in Carnegie Hall, sans any amps or computers, and she could still pack a house.

The use of sampling and loops a

plenty only add to the Heap of splendor in "Speak for Yourself." Fans of Frou Frou's lone U.S. hit, "Let Go," will find lots to like in tunes such as in the quirky "Headlock" and "Loose Ends." Her voice always remains in the forefront, but there is a lot more going on around her with the percussive effects and synth-pop beats Erasure wishes it had back in the 1980s. It's just right for; say, the special person with attention-deficit disorder in your life.

The album's highlight is also one of the year's best songs, the simple

yet symphonically majestic "Hide and Seek." In what can only be called electronic a cappella, Heap's used technology to harmonize her singing voice so it sounds like a heap of Heaps. Orchestral in its use of countermelodies and transitions, the lyrics about loss and grief only add to the emotional punch powered by Heap's enhanced vocals.

Not that she needs any enhancement in the first place, but the extra bleeps and bloops only make this great singer that much better.

*Brian Truitt*