

Barbara Cuesta

“Shine”

Dunefish/SPV

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Not long ago, the singer-songwriter Barbara Cuesta caught our attention with her EP “Anything”: it featured a vocal that was so intense that it just made you stop and listen. Now she’s followed it up with the album “Shine”: 14 tracks that are lively and light, those brings a wry smile to your lips and yet have many unexpected depths. You notice at once that the half-German, half-Spanish singer is clearly no newcomer to the music business and that music is obviously a major part of her life. Because from behind the girly charm that seems to bubble out of her at every opportunity, her experience shines through, as evidenced by way she carefully doses her many vocal nuances.

The instrumentation is economical but not overly minimalistic. Nothing is included that could rob her songs of their clarity, or her voice of its balance. Barbara Cuesta presents an image that is simultaneously strong and yet vulnerable, powerful but soft, without unnecessary flourishes and yet still synthetic. Those who insist on making comparisons will no doubt think of Tori Amos or maybe even Regina Spektor. But perhaps a more fitting comparison would be with a good Riesling from the Rhine: like this album, the perfect accompaniment for the coming summer. Daintily airy, but full of content; fruity and fresh, yet carefully aged; clearly structured and constantly accompanied by a delightful bouquet. From the very first, it delights your taste buds and then lingers seductively, awakening a clear yearning for yet more. And if that is not a clear enough warning: this music is utterly intoxicating. It goes straight to your head, burrowing into your soul and embedding itself permanently in your psyche.

You recognise aspects of yourself in it, carried on waves of weightlessness that you never suspected you had in you and also an overwhelming desire to embrace the whole world. And the latter, in particular, is something you should practice with your friends or even in the stairway of your apartment building.

Barbara explains the title track thus: “It’s about how you can do most things well if you just work hard enough at it. But that certain distinctive aura only arises if you really love what it is you’re doing.”

And that’s something you can really sense throughout this whole album.

More information at:

www.barbara-cuesta.de

www.myspace.com/barbaracuesta

www.facebook.com/barbaracuestafanpage

Promotion contact: Thomas König; e-mail: koenig.thomas@iconmusic.de; phone 0176 990 68 799

Label contact: Christian Hentschel; e-mail dunefish@dunefish.de; phone 030/30348070