

Mp3 Cynthia G. Mason - Rock: Acoustic



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Cynthia G. Mason, a songwriter from Philadelphia, writes songs that are startlingly intimate, confessional, indicting, personal and fierce. Think Suzanne Vega or Cat Power. 7 MP3 Songs ROCK: Acoustic, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: Cynthia G. Mason's self-titled CD is startlingly intimate. Her songs are confessional, indicting, personal, and fierce, but her detached delivery leavens the emotion conveyed by the performance and allows it instead to be felt by the listener. On the hushed, lyrical "'95", Mason's straightforward delivery is embraced by crystalline plucked strings and breathing, open pauses between phrases that set the stage for important lines and quietly moaning swells of cello and viola. On "Critic", Mason's moody acoustic guitar carries the song but for the occasional jagged, static-touched computerized addion (noises, percussion, ominous tones) from producer Edan Cohen. Mason's writing has been aptly compared to Joni Mitchell for its easy eloquence and the impenetrable mysteriousness of her images. She also writes with the personal honesty (but not the histrionics) of Tori Amos and the fluidity (but not the preciousness) of Sarah McLachlan. With the wonderful musical additions brought by her musicians and the overall heroin-high linear quality of the production, Mason's CD is much like the Velvet Underground with Nico-- except Mason can sing. (Clay Steakley, Performing Songwriter Magazine) A longtime acoustic solo regular, Philadelphia songwriter Cynthia Mason's debut CD features a full backing band. Think Cat Power, Ida, but not. Mason's writing rules by force of nuance and mood rather than irksome hooks. Emotive and genuinely touching, this is the voice of an embrace, as well as a tear. Amazing. (Mike McKee, Rockpile Magazine: Staff Picks) "...While songwriting can be a potentially frustrating waiting game, fortunately Mason's been patient, honing her share of gems. Her early work was recorded solo on her home four-track and released on two cassettes - Untitled (1996) and Critical Neighborhood Map (1998) - on her label, Spiderwoman Records. She was pretty wary about working with

other musicians...However, once she started hanging out at Soundgun Studio at the behest of one of the owners, her friend Edan Cohen, Mason changed her tune...Whatever diffidence she once felt toward adding other players, you'll find few traces of it now. The resulting self-titled, Cohen-produced album is an exquisitely arranged affair, from the precise folk-rock backing on "Measure" to the unsettled string section on "Wit's End"...Live the songs take on yet another new life. Among the musicians recruited for the album was Chris Powell, who in turn introduced Mason to Larry Brown and Chris Reggiani...All three are also members of Need New Body, and you can just see the standard press blurb: Acoustic guitar-strummin' songstress...joins forces with three-fifths of an art-jazz-rock freak-out troupe. But that's a bit reductive when it comes to this group. Why accentuate polarities when they make music that sounds so natural? Their supple renditions of "Subtle Things" and "For a Living" - with Reggiani's sturdy bass, Brown's subtle guitar colorings and Powell's inventive, quietly urgent percussion - underline the restless, even angry emotions that lurk in Mason's songs. 'We pretty much took the tunes and just arranged them for a live setting,' says Brown, 'And that's something I think is a really great achievement. You come up with an album like that with great string arrangements, percussion, and computer effects and then take it and re-do it all over again for the sake of playing live. With these guys, with Chris, Chris, and Cynthia, we could probably do it again. Just for the fun of it.'...(Mike Pelusi, Philadelphia City Paper) Creepiest chamber pop songstress (and we mean this in a good way)... The year is 1967. The occasionally sunlit Velvet Underground With Nico LP is released, the ultimate exercise in insect-paranoid noir rock with a viola and a German girl singer. That same year on the other side of New York City, Joni Mitchell plans her dusky chamber folk debut Song For A Seagull and the coolly complex lyricism behind "Night in the City" and "Nathan la Franer." Cynthia G. Mason is all THAT and a bag of chipped shoulders. With Grace Kelly-esque grace and Nico-like allure, Mason - on her eponymous debut CD (Spiderwoman) - intones intricately detailed songs for her seagulls like the aptly titled "Subtle Things" and "Measure." (a.d. amorosi, Philadelphia City Paper: Best of 2000 edition) "...More than just a means to distribute her tapes of 4-track recordings, Spiderwoman has served as an effective tool in carving out a personalized space for her music, words and thoughts...Although she's a female singer/songwriter - a figure very much in the current commercial zeitgeist - Mason doesn't play folk ditties or novelty tunes. Her songs are dark and often anguished, strolling paths cleared by Kristin Hersh and Cat Power. Mason's lyrics build fuzzy emotional pictures with asymmetrical images ("They fed them legends like flies/A selfish mourning forged

a hostile divide") And occasionally zero in with uncanny precision ("It's easier to humor your sense of obligation/Than to borrow what you took."). Her sound is somber, made all the more stark by the leftover space surrounding the skeleton of Mason alone with her five-string guitar..." (Brian Glazer, Philadelphia Weekly) ..."Another woman who is demanding our attention is local artist Cynthia Mason, who with an acoustic guitar and her voice alone is able to convey quite a bit of emotion on her self-produced debut Memento Mori (Spiderwoman Records). Though this was actually put together two years ago, Cynthia is often found playing around Philadelphia, and this is a great introduction to her work, even now. This seems like a pretty cathartic work for both the performer and the listener. Cynthia bellows and whispers words of pain, anger, remorse, and (hopefully) healing; words about love, loss, hope and fear echo throughout her music, backed by a sparse acoustic guitar. This effect forces the words to resonate in the listener's head much more than the usual easily digestible pop. (Brooke, Labyrinth Newspaper)

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