

## Mp3 Jessi Hamilton - Pop: Piano



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Piano-driven pop/rock blend with haunting melodies. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Piano, EASY LISTENING: Soft Rock Details: We live in a time when a large and accepted sorority of successful female artists seem to always be at the top of the record charts and selling out every stage they step on to. And while pioneers like Grace Slick, Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell and Carole King paved the way initially, the door swung completely open with the advent of The Lilith Fair and with the emergence of artists such as Melissa Etheridge, Sarah McLachlan and Tori Amos. Though only 21 and not even born at the onset of the Women-Who-Rock movement, Jessi Hamilton is sure to be a name that will soon be added to the list of important female singer/songwriters. Having recently released her self-titled debut album, Jessi Hamilton writes, sings and plays music on her piano that is both passionate and compelling. Hailing from Raleigh, North Carolina, Jessi has spent years honing her craft, which is a radio friendly blend of piano-driven soulful rock'n'roll and ethereal, yet powerful ballads. Though she refuses to be trapped by having to always deliver one specific style of music, Hamilton recordings remain consistent by means of her exceptional voice. With an initial indie release on A2X/Aorta Records, her album, JESSI HAMILTON, has been getting nothing less than rave reviews. The Hollywood Reporter's John Lappen called Ms. Hamilton: "A rising talent with a great voice whose multi-faceted material." John Bungey of London's Mojo Magazine gave a similar rave: "(Jessi Hamilton) has a fine voice and the material is strong. She's obviously a talent..." ABC Radio's Vince Marino adds: "Trust me, this girl can sing! And she's a quirky, intelligent songwriter too. You'll be glad you were introduced to Jessi Hamilton." The album is quickly finding its way onto both commercial and college radio play lists, and Hamilton (along with her recently assembled six member backing band) is now finding her way on to stages including Manhattan's MERCURY LOUNGE and the LILAC FESTIVAL in Upstate NY, where she played for over 2,500 enthusiastic supporters. In

addition to her music career, Jessi has been courted by film production companies in the US and Europe, and has received her first offer to star in a big budget film, which is still in its developmental stage. In addition, she found time to make her first music video for her infectious and haunting rock ballad, "I'll Cry For You." The video was directed by Kevin Kilcher, who is a distant cousin to another pop diva, Jewel.

The album Jessi Hamilton features 11 songs written or co-written by Hamilton, as well as two songs written by pop music legend Randy Newman, and soul music icon, Al Green, respectively. While recording the album, Jessi was able to meet both music superstars, who gave her their blessing after hearing her versions of their songs. As soon as she finished recording her debut CD, she plunged into her next project: singing back-up vocals on the new solo album by Foreigner lead vocalist, Lou Gramm.

Gramm, considered by many to be one of the greatest rock voices of all time, has called Jessi Hamilton, "a remarkable talent." Although she is an accomplished vocalist and pianist, it is Hamilton's ability to write compelling and powerful soul-flavored rock songs that has grabbed everyone's attention. City Newspaper's Frank Blas recently wrote: "Her music is lush and full of the simplicity found in a young girl's complicated life..." In early 2004, Hamilton's "I'll Cry For You" won a spot on *ROCKER-R-GRL Magazine's DISCOVERIES 2004* CD and Hamilton has been called by editor Carla DeSantis as "among the best unsigned female acts in America." DeSantis further added: "Jessi Hamilton is a young artist that shows great promise. 'I'll Cry For You' is a passionate song, beautifully produced and meticulously arranged. We're proud to have bragging rights, discovering her early in what is sure to be a great career." "The last couple of years have been a whirlwind for me," says Hamilton. "I have been lucky to build a really supportive and solid team behind my career, including my collaborators, producers, marketing people, and of course, my band. It's all together now, so I am looking forward to getting out on the road and sharing my music." Born in Raleigh, in 1984, Hamilton excelled in school, but in her heart, knew very early on that only a music career could truly fulfill her. "I have been singing nearly every day for as long as I can remember," says Hamilton, who has juggled the recording of her first album and performing with a college education. "Although I started taking voice lessons at age eight, I have been singing since I was four. It is just something that has always been part of my life, and has always come naturally for me."

Jessi has the unique ability to mold her voice around the needs of the music she is writing at the time. On her rock-oriented material she projects each lyric with intensity and conviction; and on her soft and introspective ballads, she sings in a high voice that is pure and sweet, and one that harkens back to the

early acoustic music of Joni Mitchell. In addition to her ability to write and sing her songs, Hamilton is also an exceptional piano and keyboard player. Formally trained in piano since the age of four, she has extensive experience in playing rock, classical, Broadway and some jazz styles of piano. After hearing Jessi Hamilton's current recordings it all comes together: amazing musicianship, songs from the heart and a voice that is undeniable. "In the last few years I have been able to discover so many of the incredible artists that have been at the forefront of the music scene for years ( -- Sting, Peter Gabriel, Evanescence, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Queen, and Alicia Keys are among her present favorites -- ), but early on I rarely listened to any contemporary pop or rock," says Hamilton, an only child whose parents have always supported the development of her musical talent. "In reality," she adds, "I was a Broadway junkie." "My folks had many of the classic Broadway soundtracks and we often listened to those records at home. Once I got into middle school and high school, I participated in chorus and many of the school musical productions. That's really where I got a lot of my experience in performance." But somewhere along the way, Jessi Hamilton took a left turn. "I kind of came out of my shell when I turned 14," she says. "Some kids go through a rebellious stage; that wasn't me. I started discovering both classic and contemporary pop music, and I took my solace in song writing. I paid attention to what was coming out - whether it was an Elton John record or something new by No Doubt - but for the most part, I concentrated on what I was creating. My focus was on these songs that I knew were inside of me." Around the same time, Hamilton connected with Raleigh-area recording engineer and producer, Chris Stevens, who helped her make her first demos. Stevens has worked in the studio with artists as diverse as Clay Aiken, Gospel legend Shirley Caesar, and Foreigner lead vocalist, Lou Gramm. "The studio he worked at was referred to me by a guitar teacher I was taking lessons from," says Hamilton. "I was 14 and I was just getting started. Chris heard something in my voice and in the basic songs I had come to the studio with, and eventually he went from being just an engineer to becoming a producer for me." Hamilton and Stevens worked off and on for four years, until her current style (and some of these songs) had been developed and recorded. "Chris has been an incredible inspiration to me," says Hamilton. "He is an awesome guitarist and he has co-written some of my material. He helped me to create songs that are multi-dimensional and go far beyond what I thought they could be." The period in Hamilton's life from age 14 through her 18th birthday was a hectic, yet productive one. In addition to being an honor student in school, she spent four years first attending modeling school and then, walking the runway at various

competitions and events. Unwilling to lessen her commitment to her music, Hamilton finished her final year of high school being home schooled. "It was the only way I could do what I was doing and still concentrate on my music," she says. "In the end, it worked out fine." In 2002, she caught the attention of music journalist and artist manager Bruce Pilato who has worked with several platinum artists as diverse as Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Foreigner, The Tubes and Asia. "I found Bruce's website on the Internet and contacted him through email. Fortunately, he was willing to take the time to see what I was about." In addition to signing with Pilato Entertainment, she also was able to retain the North Carolina law firm that represents platinum superstars Hootie & The Blowfish. Rather than follow the traditional method of using demos to get a record deal and having the label pay for (and own) her records, Hamilton's family was able to fund the remaining equipment necessary to allow her and Stevens to make a world-class album in his Raleigh-based studio. Pilato was also involved in the album's production. "I was able to do what most artists can't do until they are bonafide stars," says Hamilton. "I have had the freedom and the luxury to work on my first album at a pace and time period that makes sense for both myself and the music. Knowing that I could keep doing a track until we got it right, instead of watching a clock, has made all the difference on this album." "It's really important that my music can convey a sense of honesty and hope," says Hamilton. "An audience can usually tell when something comes from the heart, and I have always kept that in mind when I write. The songs have many universal themes, but in the same breath, they are all an outgrowth of some life experience I have gone through or witnessed." On "Kiss Goodnight" Hamilton sings of making every minute count with those that you love; "Arms Of Love" is a simple love song written for her boyfriend; "Missing You Again" tells the story of a couple that is separated by emotional distance; and the hip-hop flavored "Turn Off, Shut Down" is a warning to not let the modern technology of today's computers, palm pilots and cellular phones control one's life. Jessi Hamilton played all of the piano and most of the other keyboards on the album. Joining her are music veteran and bassist Ernie Donadelle; guitarist and vocalist Johnny Orr; vocalist Michelle Gyzen; lead guitarist Don Mancuso (who has toured and recorded with Foreigner's Lou Gramm); drummer C.S. Dunnit; and her current band members: drummer Bob Andressi; keyboardist Brian Eggleston; bassist Harry Ford; and vocalists Cindy Samulski and Dawn Sherman. Producer Chris Stevens plays additional guitars, keyboards and did all of the programming on the record. In addition to working on her own album, Ms. Hamilton recently appeared as a featured guest vocalist on the new album of spiritual music entitled: Under The Roof - The Songs

Hymns of Stephen S. Robb, MD. "I have been lucky to have so much support behind myself and this project from my family and the team of professionals I have been able to assemble," says Hamilton. "Now, I look forward to being able to bring the music to as many people as possible."

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