

Mp3 Leah Siegel Presents - Folk: Modern Folk



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The critics have described her as "Judy Garland meets Jeff Buckley". Leah Siegel puts romance, wit and raw talent back into music. 7 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: REVIEW Leah Siegel, October 24th, 2003 @ Mickey's Blue Room (Avenue C and 11th) by Jeff Harris The scene was simple enough: A girl with a guitar. A clarinet player. A tiny little bar with PBR on tap. No cover at the door. Everything about the scene was simple and unadorned. That was until Leah started singing. With the disclaimer that she would begin with her encore, she launched her performance with a jarringly beautiful "Que Sera Sera" which served to hush the stunned room. Like any seasoned open mic-er, she knew how to capture the audience from the outset and keep their attention. For the next 40 minutes, Leah braved the elements of her music (and her own "mental distress") to deliver a heartfelt and candid performance. Through the swinging barroom door, the near hurricane conditions served as a fitting backdrop. Strangely, Leah does not seem the star of her own show. It is instead her unruly voice which steals each song. She has developed a complete trust in her own ear and is at times visibly surprised by where her voice is taking her: sometimes into a delicate falsetto coloratura, sometimes a head-spinning howl, sometimes a throaty sigh into the microphone. In each song, simple ideas and melodies are transformed into high-flying loop-de-loop rollercoaster rides. These are singers' songs. To compare her to other singers is at once confining and informative. Given her locale, it is understandable that she hears a lot of Jeff Buckley references. However, the reason they are compared is because there are simply not a lot of people that can do what they can do - that is indulge any vocal whim. They both share a good jazz singer's improvisational nature to push a melody to the point of bending, but not breaking. Indeed, my first instinct was not that she sounded like Buckley, but that they were both children of the same musical mother: jazz. While I can hear the classy bravado of Nina Simone and Billy Holiday, there is also the

fierce recklessness of Bjork and Tori Amos. Ultimately, it is a voice that plants a listener firmly in his seat, but suggests he wear a seatbelt. When one can demand this kind of attention with one's voice it is predictable that the songwriting would suffer. Not so. Leah's songs are constructed around her voice: often lazy and brooding so as to allow for what she does best: be unpredictable. "Red Shoes" was an obvious standout from both a compositional and performance standpoint. This song about the futility of trying to fit into her new red shoes (and other's expectations) mixes her bluesy conflicted cry with seemingly mundane subject matter to create a delicate little world. "Walking In Circles" treads on the same emotional territory, infusing everyday situations with melancholic intimacy. On the whole, the performance could probably stand for another song which would serve to ground the listener. Constantly pushing the envelope can leave the listener pining for resolution, so if you're looking for Norah Jones' comforting country vibe, look elsewhere. Talent like Leah's is inevitable.

----- BIO Leah Siegel There are singers who can play guitar. There are songwriters who can sing. There are guitar players who can write. Then there is Leah Siegel. This New York City singer-songwriter is a seamless powerhouse of contradictions: at once hopelessly raw and yet elegantly composed, bombastic while intimate, contemporary and classic. She is blessed with a voice that whispers in your ear one moment and rips the roof off the next. Leah Siegel Presents is the beginning. Released in January of 2004, this record leverages Leah's live show in the studio, giving it a current, no-frills feel, fitting of an introduction. The tracks feature Leah on guitar and vocals backed by saxophone, clarinet, and string arrangements of co-producer Jeff Hudgins. It is a recording that her fans have been eagerly awaiting and she has not disappointed. From the sublime "The Grandma Song" to the ferocious "The Early Morning Hour," the tracks reveal Siegel's great ambition to discover her own style. Even the lone cover, "I Found A Reason", written by Lou Reed, is woven in as if it were her own. Leah Siegel's fans seem as emotive as her set. They listen intently, quietly, only to unanimously erupt at each song's close. "Performance is like meditating. You have to give in completely, hypnotize the entire body, and when your set is over you come to and you wonder what happened to the last 45 minutes." - Leah Siegel At her recent CD release party, the venue was so crowded that the only space in the club was up on stage. Said one fan, "Performances like Leah's will never cease to be compelling." Truly, watching Leah Siegel play is like seeing a train coming in the subway - you know inevitably it's going to come and it will be powerful when it does. 2004 will be a promising year for the young singer-songwriter. All aboard.

----- Testimonial I just came back from one of the more incredible performances I've ever seen in my life. Leah Siegel, with piercing yet jazz-like vocals, haunting, joyful and beautiful, wondrous sax/clarinet solos, and exceptional guitar arrangements by the singer herself - you really need to see her play - Seldom am I blown away by someone in this way. And the lyrical content is really varied, interesting, and so layered. It is people like Leah that inspire me to keep pushing myself musically. She has opened up for Ben Folds and Tori Amos. leahsiegel for gig info. I think you'll be hearing a lot more from her. -----

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