

Mp3 Arquilla/barnett - Beautiful - Original Concept Recording



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Beautiful is a new rock musical about how people define beauty, and how they are inevitably defined by it. 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, POP: Piano Details: This album is the original concept recording of a cutting-edge, new musical that is in the final stages of development and preparing for its stage debut. The piece entitled "Beautiful," is the product of a collaboration that began at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in August, 2003. "Beautiful" follows a painter as he tries to free himself from an emotional and creative depression. The story that unfolds is both a physical and psychological journey into the minds and motivations of characters invested in the downtown New York art scene. The show's theme is an exploration of what beauty really is, how people define it, and how it inescapably defines them. "Beautiful" attempts to innovate the way that song can be used in a dramatic context, as it is greatly influenced by the narrative that music videos bring to rock and pop songs. The story is dark and humorous, the scenes kinetic and quirky. Each song behaves as a stylized dramatic episode, much like a music video. The score is a fusion of rock, pop, funk, groove, and disco, yet maintains a singular, intellectual compositional voice. The result is a show composed of episodic, stylized book scenes and lyrically universal rock songs, all the while sustaining a sense of dramatic resonance. We believe that this piece will appeal to both seasoned theatergoers as well as new audiences who share our love of contemporary music and drama. BIOGRAPHY: Michael Arquilla (bookwriter/lyricist) is a current resident of New York City, by way of Boston. "Beautiful" is his second musical and sixth piece of dramatic work to date. His work has been seen in New York, Boston, Hartford, and Philadelphia. He holds an M.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and is an honors graduate of Boston College. Additionally, he has studied drama under Anthony Cornish of the Royal Shakespeare Company and Tomas MacAnna

of the Abbey Theater in Dublin, Ireland. His first musical, "Philosopher Kings," earned him a Gilbert Grant in 1999. Stephen Barnett (composer) also received his M.F.A. from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He holds a B.A. in Music Composition from Duke University, where as an undergraduate, he studied under the tutelage of Stephen Jaffe and Scott Lindroth. He has received both the Mary Duke Biddle Scholarship and the Henry Schuman Prize in Music Composition, and is currently a member of the American Music Center and ASCAP. His first album, a collection of neo-classical piano works entitled "Free Spirit," was released in 1999 and can be found at Amazon as well as the iTunes music store. THE PLAYERS: Keyboards - Stephen Barnett Guitars - Chris Barnett Bass - Ed Kollar Drums - Alex Vittum Vocals - Chris Barnett, Stephen Barnett, Darius Smith, Kori Withers Producer - Brian McTear

----- PLOT SYNOPSIS: Act I Sebastian, a painter once very well received, contemplates his recent artistic failures and remembers the breakup with his ex-girlfriend, Emily. He vows to reclaim the beautiful life he once had ("Beautiful"). His best friend, Archer, a cocksure photographer, celebrates his own critical success in Sebastian's presence. He tries to convince Sebastian to break out of his depression and paint again. In a flashback sequence, Sebastian produces a painting that he has been working on, a portrait of Emily ("Window"). Archer is enamored with the portrait and offers to organize a meeting with an art dealer. Sebastian agrees, succumbs to Archer's persuasive charm, and the two head out into the New York night ("Suba"). At the nightclub known as Suba, Sebastian tries meeting someone new, but instead finds himself alienated by the social scene surrounding him. Archer, thriving on the same environment, leads a crowd of people out to another bar. Realizing he has left his jacket inside the club, Sebastian ends up in an argument with a bouncer, Cristos. An altercation ensues, through which Sebastian meets a free-spirited, young woman named Julia. She tries to resolve things using her charm, but ends up complicating matters further. Cristos punches Sebastian, hurting him. Julia, feeling partly responsible, follows Sebastian back to his apartment. Back at the apartment, Julia and Sebastian discover a real connection, completely natural and unaffected. However, as Sebastian's mind wanders towards thoughts of Emily (his ideal of love and beauty), the portrait of Emily animates, she steps out of the canvas, and seduces him away from this new potential romance ("Choice"). Julia recognizes his hesitance and leaves, but hope remains for a new relationship between them. Archer and Sebastian wait for Vivian Mott in her gallery, Tribeca Studio, a newly renovated gallery. Vivian enters in a glamorous, humorous whirlwind. She is a British art dealer

looking to revive the lackluster New York art scene. She appeals to Sebastian's need for acceptance and persuades him to change his image and style, in order to create a persona that she can market. Urged on by the Beautiful Chorus and Emily, Sebastian signs a contract with Vivian ("We Live in White Rooms"). Sebastian, trying to embrace the changes associated with Vivian's "career makeover," finds himself artistically blocked as a result. Emily animates again and reminisces about a scene from their past to get him started. The moment described comes to life around him, warm and wonderful, until disrupted by the apartment's buzzer. Julia has come over to buy one of his paintings, one that no one else wanted. As Julia stands at the window, Sebastian is reminded of Emily through Julia, and he begins to paint Julia's portrait. Emily reappears, guides Sebastian's hand as he paints, then poses with Julia as they sing of finding someone who is truly understanding ("In My Dream"). The moment escalates into a romantic delirium, as Sebastian embraces both women. The three of them exit into the bedroom together. The morning after, Julia is dismayed to find the portrait looks more like Emily than her. At Tribeca Studio, Archer argues with Vivian about his work not being in a prime location for the gallery's opening. It is revealed that the two made a deal: if Archer could get Sebastian to sign with Vivian, Archer would get representation as well. Vivian manipulates Archer into giving her "the dirt" regarding Sebastian's past. The disclosure unfolds in a surreal flashback that Archer part narrates, part relives. Vivian opens Tribeca Studio with great fanfare, heralding the gala as the rebirth of the New York art scene, where she displays Archer and Sebastian's work side by side ("Rebirth"). Archer (as usual) grabs the spotlight, engaging and winning over the crowd ("Picture Yourself, Pt. I"). Sebastian is confronted by Vivian and a party interested in purchasing the Emily portrait. Vivian proceeds to divulge Sebastian's messy history, which merely increases interest in the work. Sebastian steps outside to deal with his growing ambivalence regarding the sale of his most treasured piece ("Better"). Upon returning, he informs Vivian of his decision not to sell Emily, and discovers that Archer betrayed his privacy and friendship ("Picture Yourself, Pt. II"). Vivian auctions off the painting of Emily against Sebastian's wishes. He has had enough. He takes Emily off the wall and leaves gallery. In the streets, he curses the world and claims he only needs his fantasy to make him happy. He garners control of the Beautiful Chorus, then takes them and Emily into his apartment and locks the door ("Erase Me"). Act II Answering machine messages sound in the darkness, indicating the passage of time and Sebastian's alienation. Lights reveal his apartment, walls and ceiling completely painted as a mural, and Sebastian living in a world of his own creation. Emily leads him through fantastic

scenes of the best moments of his life with her ("Work Today"). Julia shows up at his door, irate with the fact that she's being ignored. She is frightened and concerned by Sebastian's current emotional and physical state. She tries to get him to open up, but provoked by Emily, Sebastian alienates her further. He realizes that the one thing that isn't perfect in this world is himself. Equipped with a canvas and a mirror, he sets out to paint a better version of himself ("Self-Portrait"). The alarming result is Cristos, the bouncer from Suba. He animates and steps off of the canvas. In her office, Vivian pursues the reacquisition of the Emily portrait. Its price has skyrocketed due to the drama that occurred at the opening. Archer wrestles with his cognitive dissonance regarding Sebastian, success, and jealousy. Although he attempts to keep his denial hidden, Vivian makes it clear to Archer that she is well aware of what his motivations are. Meanwhile, Emily and Cristos begin to exercise their control over an unraveling Sebastian. He calls the real Emily on the phone, but caught between a crumbling reality and an increasing fantasy, he leaves variations of voicemail messages, each one more disjointed than the last. After several failed attempts, Cristos leaves the message himself, inviting the real Emily to the Valence Festival, an underground art venue from Sebastian's past. Cristos then leads Sebastian and the Beautiful Chorus to the Valence ("I Wanna Know"). At the venue, Cristos proclaims Sebastian's triumphant return and denounces the corruption of the art world as Sebastian, impervious, confidently deals with Vivian and Archer ("One More Time"). The real Emily arrives, but she is not the warm, loving person that Sebastian has been romantically idealizing. Instead, she is (as she always was) a callous, shallow woman who is only present because of Archer's exhibition - a collection of intimate photographs of herself. Cristos induces Sebastian into throwing a lunging punch at Archer. The Valence disappears, and back to Sebastian's apartment, where Sebastian and Cristos adulterate the painting of Emily, a moment that escalates into the destruction of Sebastian's entire fantasy ("Emily"). From out of the darkness, the Beautiful Chorus sings about the dangers of idealization, perfectionism, and the defining of yourself through others, asserting that one's shortcomings are just as valid a part of what makes one beautiful as much as anything else ("Anthem"). Sebastian knocks on Julia's door late at night. He apologizes for his recent behavior, but what Julia wants is just honesty. He finally opens up to her and tells her the truth about what's been going on in his life, exposing his inadequacies. Julia does the same, admitting that she doesn't find herself attractive, an insecurity that was exacerbated by Sebastian's portrait of her in the first act. This honesty marks a new start for them. As it is late, Julia offers her couch to Sebastian. They retire, waiting for a new day to start

fresh. Sebastian lights a candle in the darkness and starts to sketch Julia as she sleeps. However, she isn't sleeping, but playfully posing for him, pretending to sleep. Sebastian realizes that the beauty in this simple behavior is something he can't quite capture in a picture. He abandons the sketch and instead chooses to watch her as she lies there ("You're Not Sleeping").

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