

Album Review: Bue's words will take listeners for a ride

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Mary Bue is a gypsy.

She's traveled to the East Coast, she's traveled to the West Coast, and ultimately she popped back up (maybe "bobbed back up" like an apple) right back where she started - in Duluth.

She has a fine new recording called "Apple in the Ocean" that gives the listener a little snapshot of her world with all its joys, fears, foibles, warts, dreams, desires and neuroses.

Bue doesn't just write simple, plain ol' love songs. She writes songs like clipped, jagged, pointed, expressive, wordy little journal entries that are part riddle, part rhyme and often scan like some ancient (hard to decipher) Egyptian hieroglyphics. After a spin through this new disc I felt like I'd had a ride on some old World War I biplane doing loop-dee-loops for half an hour: very unsettling, but very stimulating.

Bue's tunes don't have linear progressions where A follows B that leads to C. Bue's songs have the linear-ness of a Dow Jones Industrial average chart over the past four years. Up, down, down further, sideways. She's fearless as a songwriter: Doesn't seem she has filter between thought and pen. It's raw and vivid and makes aural 3-D sound like black and white.

The opening to "Savasana Bliss" works around alliteration, repeating the opening syllables to build some tension "fire frightened forgettable fortified ferocity's hit" and "incumbent incoming incongruent myth." The tune asks the question, "you're an acid trip liar, are you tripping or are you sober?" It's a hell of a question.

"Cosmopolitan" has one of those melodies (and it's a very good one) that haunts you because you feel you've heard it before, but you just can't put your finger on where. It works perfectly under lyrics of "being on your own little planet" and the uncomfortable realization that one doesn't fit in with societal norms. But near the tune's conclusion we hear the ray of optimism that maybe "your home is around the bend or perhaps in your lover's hand." I can almost guarantee you that you will be humming the melody and inserting your own lyrics (because you don't completely remember Bue's) and essentially making up your own version.

"Dentistry," yes, the title is, indeed, "dentistry" not "destiny" or "density" or "propensity." Only Bue would have the courage to write a tune with that name: this one about a woman who "failed at dentistry" then has a horrible experience in the love game.

I wonder if the people who shelled out the Kickstarter jack knew what a wild ride they were in for with "Apple in the Ocean." It looks innocent enough. Harmless you say.

Sweet. Not hardly. This is one of the “shoe bomb in the sneakers” deals that you’d better be prepared for.

“Apple in the Ocean” isn’t for someone who longs to hear those old-fashioned love songs comin’ down in three-part harmony. It’s for someone who wants something fresh and uninhibited; something stimulating and candid; and something instinctive and unbridled. It’s a winner.