

music

Shannon Curtis



Start Playing Cole Porter

Sultry, poppy, jazzy, like a younger Tori Amos with less focus on sex and more on words, **Shannon Curtis** inspires more adjectives and adverbs than good writing manuals allow us to put in the paper. The *L.A. Times* apparently called her "the love child of Fiona Apple and Norah Jones," which seems a bit over the top yet close to the target. Curtis' piano playing and her torchy voice make songs like "Wasted" a risky proposition during the workday (much less during a workout): One listen, and you'll want to be lounging at Luna or Davis', shot glass in hand and air of sophisticated desperation emanating from your too, too realistic dissipation. "My good sense is wasted when it comes to you," she sings. OK, perhaps a hotel bar after an assignation comes to mind more than a Eugene jazz club. Now to go out and find someone to waste good sense on ... wait, snap out of it! It's just a song. A compelling song.

Curtis, like so many of us, started playing the piano as a youngster. Her teacher told her she played like a boy, which doesn't seem like the best way to start a career in the piano - 7-year-old boys aren't exactly known for their finesse at the keyboard. But Curtis persisted and developed polish and the kind of lyrical touch that comes from perhaps a bit too much Norton anthology reading. (Note to Shannon: It's not a crime to capitalize words in your lyrics, really.) She started writing these languidly anguished songs after the breakup of her marriage (to a pastor, no less - one wonders what he thinks of the results of all that pain) and, sorry Shannon, but listeners are all the better for your dark days. Clearly talented, Curtis is a warm-voiced young woman whose musical hooks sit pleasantly with her words of regret and longing. "Watch your step as you cross this threshold / cause I recall last april had you sold on goodbye," she writes in "Boomerangs and Seasaws," the title song of her debut album, released this month. Snag the album or listen to a few songs online, and then satisfy that whisky craving at 8:30 pm Thursday, July 19, at Luna. Nick Bearden opens, and John Shipe is playing in there somewhere as well. 21+ show. A steal at \$5 (though the alcohol will put you back a bit more, as might the resulting affairs). - *Suzi Steffen*

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