

FIDDLING FATALE

Laura Cortese jumps genres like freight trains. The young fiddler has appeared alongside rockers like Band of Horses, Patterson Hood and Michael Franti, while her solo work is drenched in Americana and classical sensibilities. "I think I knew pop music first," Cortese says, explaining that her mom's vinyl record collection influenced her at a young age with the likes of Otis Redding, Motown, CSNY and Elvis.

"Pop music is the folk music of the next generation," Cortese says. "I was a huge fan of Elvis at age 5," she jokes, admitting she collected every Elvis cassette she could get her hands on. At age 12, Cortese attended fiddle camp, which helped her realize "there was a community around music." Since then, she says, it's been a process of discovery — getting to know different musicians through the styles of music they play, whether it be classical, rock, Celtic music or bluegrass.

Cortese's latest release, 2013's *Into the Dark*, is a stark and arresting exercise in chamber-folk, consisting of a loosely arranged string trio of Cortese's old friends, "a cellist and one other fiddler; I play viola," Cortese explains. Cortese's homespun singing voice is like a cold mountain stream — at first seemingly fluid and lyrical, but upon dipping your fingers in, brisk and shockingly strong.

"Occasionally a fan from a certain genre will be disappointed with the new album," she says. But she feels *Into the Dark* further focuses her different influences into one sound. "I want people's brains to shut off and just experience the music," Cortese says.

Laura Cortese plays with Fish & Bird 7:30 pm Monday, May 27, at Axe & Fiddle in Cottage Grove; \$5. — William Kennedy



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