

WOMEN'S WORKS

Beautiful just part of music by women you can hear in coming weeks

Carole King vaulted to fame by co-writing a slew of sensational '60s hits for various bands, most notably the Shirelles' "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" She solidified her position as one of the 20th century's greatest songwriters with a series of 1970s triumphs, beginning with her landmark *Tapestry* album featuring King's own voice and piano, which sold more than any single pop album of that time and helped kickstart the singer-songwriter era.

A strong and kind parent and colleague who gave up the celebrity lifestyle to get back to nature in Idaho, an ardent supporter of progressive political and environmental causes who's donated years of her life to making the world a better place ... Carole King is one of the artists I admire most.

Bursting with boomer-bait songs, the 2013 jukebox musical *Beautiful* (which Tom Hanks is bringing to the big screen), alighting next week at the Hult Center, recounts King's journey from her mom's Brooklyn flat through the artist's bold auditions with music impresario Don Kirshner to her college meeting with the fellow student who would become her husband and songwriting partner, Gerry Goffin.

The show chronicles the pair, along with fellow married songwriting team Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann (which allows the show to include some of their classics, such as "You've Lost That Loving Feeling"), over a decade as they crank out hits in New York's legendary Brill Building songwriting factory.

King's most significant story — also the story of much

of her generation — is her subsequent move from the conventionality and artificiality of postwar American culture to something more personal, more real.

Yet *Beautiful* spends so much time cramming in the hits (22 of the 26 here) during her early-to-mid-'60s rise to fame that it rushes through the really dramatic part of her life in the last few minutes, after the troubled Goffin leaves, sparking her move to Los Angeles and transformation from prodigious pop craftswoman to self-actualizing singer-songwriter. That makes King (who composed the tunes) a bit player for much of her own musical.

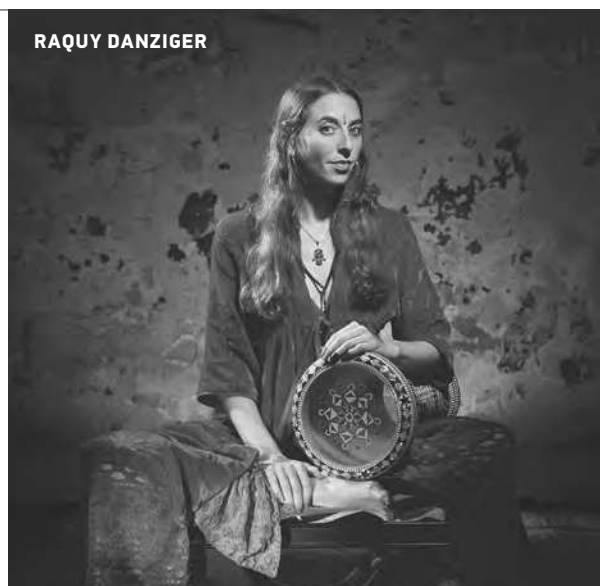
The show's belated attempt to make her achievement of "you-go-girl!" self-confidence its theme rings false. As her memoir *A Natural Woman* reveals, King was pretty much who she was from the get-go: gifted, determined, confident. "Someone had to write hit songs," she told herself at age 15, when she showed up at mighty Atlantic Records with a couple of songs in hand. "Why not me?"

The musical's soulless, glossy arrangements and the Broadway singers' big, brassy voices vitiate the heartfelt honesty and authenticity King helped bestow upon pop music. "I had found the key to success in performing," King wrote in her memoir. "It was to be authentically myself."

While the skin-deep *Beautiful* brings us the songs that made Carole King a star, it surely doesn't bring us Carole King.

More fabulous women's music — and words! — arrive Saturday afternoon, Oct. 14, when some of Portland's finest classical singers team up in a free concert at the UO's Beall Hall. **Northwest Art Song and The Ensemble** present superb soprano **Arwen Myers** and mezzo **Laura Beckel Thoreson**, accompanied by pianist **Susan McDaniel**, in settings of poetry written by women, with music by some of today's finest female composers, including Libby Larsen, Stacy Garrop, Juliana Hall and Abbie Betinis.

You can hear more contemporary classical music,



including works by Oregon composers, the next afternoon, Sunday, Oct. 15, at First Christian Church, 1166 Oak Street, when **Delgani Quartet** plays music by Eugene's own **Paul Safar**, L.A.-based Latin Grammy winner **Yalil Guerra**, Willamette University alum **Andrew Robinson**, **Joshua Hey**, and the *Sixth Quartet* by internationally renowned Portland *eminence grise* **Tomas Svoboda**, inspired by Shostakovich.

Finally, another female musical pioneer, Turkish composer/performer/teacher **Raquy Danziger**, brings her duo to The Shedd this Friday, Oct. 6. A virtuosa on dumbek goblet drum and 12-string Kemenche Tarhu spike fiddle, she incorporates rhythms from various Middle Eastern regions as well as modern samba, funk and even hip-hop beats. Michael Burdi accompanies on oud (lute), and Eugene's own unclassifiable global music band **Mood Area 52** opens. ■

CLASSIFIEDS

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Misc.

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EVENTS

Events

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 A journey inward to reconnect with yourself, your dreams and your creativity.
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