

POPSICULTURE

Jennifer Sawdon - Fighting the Fairytale



Fighting the Fairytale is a no-nonsense debut album from Jennifer Sawdon on her own label, Little Me Records. It's also a fairytale in its own right - Jennie, a wedding singer and vocal coach, has done things the proactive way in putting out this quite incredible collection of original music.

Sawdon keeps things sweet and simple throughout, with clean instrumentals, tinkling piano accompaniment and frankly impressive vocals that brought a tear to my eye on at least three separate occasions during my first listen-through of Fighting the Fairytale. Anyone thinking of putting their own music out there would be wise to take this as their roadmap - it's a lesson in how to do it right.

High Points

My personal high point is Echoes, which opens with a recording of a young Jennie being introduced to sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, but actually launches into the adult Sawdon singing a lilting and nostalgic look at childhood and growing up. It's a wonderful departure from the usual love stories, and instead tells a tale of familial and sisterly love. There's an innocence and a purity here that would be hard to fake.

A number of tracks were written by Jennie for her new husband, actor Chris Geere, and again the honesty shows through in the emotion of the lyrics and the performance alike. Nothing is a fine example, expressing perfectly the beauty to be found in quiet moments alone with a loved one.

The closing minute and a half of Fighting the Fairytale shows a different side to Sawdon, as The Doctor's central motif is spun over and over against a stripped-bare backing track. It's atmospheric and a great way to wind down the album, as well as hinting at an as-yet untapped store of versatility still to come from a performer who must surely have big things ahead of her.



The Verdict

There's literally nowhere I can think of that this album wouldn't sound amazing. In the car - bringing out the beauty of a summer's day or cocooning you in a warm glow that shuts out the winter cold. In the bath, those bathroom acoustics highlighting every nuance of Sawdon's golden vocals. Even as background music, if you could bring yourself to tear your full attention away, Fighting the Fairytale is a perfect balance of ballads and beats.

Being a wedding singer must be a fairytale in itself, the chance to do something you love while people all around you celebrate a love story of their own - and then do it all over again next week with a new happy couple. I really hope somewhere out there, two lovebirds catch a hold of Sawdon's music as their own passion bursts into flame, and choose her song - and not just her singing - to accompany their first dance.

On a less sentimental note, this is perfect Valentine's Day fayre if you're planning a romantic meal - and if you're in the Manchester area, you really should check Jennie's website for details of her upcoming live performances. I'll be attending one as soon as I get chance.

Final Score: 91%

by Bob Bardsley