



Photo: Julie Wyld www.julewyld.com

Hailing from Parksville but currently resident in North Vancouver, Ambre records under her given name and certainly has everything in place to emulate the success of these Nanaimoite peers. In respect of “marketability” for any willing record label, Ambre comes pretty much fully formed as a skilled musician with a wonderful voice, stunning original material and the A&R man’s icing of drop-dead-gorgeous looks. But comparisons with Crowe or Krall end with their island of origin and the fact that they all play piano. Whereas Crowe is a singer-songwriter in the classic mould and Krall a jazz stylist inspired by vintage material, Ambre’s sound is wrapped in an urban sheen with the production values of hip-hop and modern RnB. Think along the lines of Nina Simone filtered through Lauryn Hill, Jill Scott, Alicia Keys and Erykah Badu.

Despite boasting the lot as far as I see and hear it, Ambre is developing her music career at her own pace, weighing up the attention she receives and not making any hasty decisions. “I’ve turned down contracts that I felt didn’t serve what I’m trying to do with my career,” she told me recently. “I mean, a label’s main job is to provide marketing, and an artist really has to consider how they can serve a label, and vice-versa. Signing to a label isn’t necessarily the best thing that ever happens to an artist, but if it’s the right contract and the right relationship, then I think it would be a very positive move.”

Considering herself first and foremost a jazz singer, Ambre draws on life experiences – whether good or bad – in order to achieve the depth of feeling present in the affecting songs on her polished debut CD *Path of Soul* (Independent). “Music is a beautiful avenue for the expression of uncomfortable and positive emotions,” she explains. “But to be frank, I feel there is a relationship – for me, anyway – between life’s challenges and the creativity and process of songwriting.”

One such life challenge came for Ambre when, aged seventeen, she and her father lost everything they owned to a devastating house fire. They were not insured. As someone

AMBRE RIPPON: FOLLOWING THE PATH OF SOUL

BY DAVID MORRISON

In the UK, *The Guardian* newspaper is widely considered by discerning readers as a daily to trust, its coverage of current affairs as close to the truth as can be found. A natural consequence of this is that consumers also tend to consider the publication a fairly accurate guide in terms of opinions on popular culture.

Last July, the paper’s website ran a podcast showcasing Canadian music, highlighting recent phenomena such as Feist and Arcade Fire alongside those woven into the fabric of our society, like Joni Mitchell and Neil Young. The responses aroused, mostly questioning this or that omission, included listener ‘Norrie C’ proclaiming Ambre Rippon “the next big thing...following in the footsteps of Allison Crowe and Diana Krall.”

who can relate directly to this experience and the massive attendant emotions, I was curious to see if this particular event had somehow influenced her music, just as it has certain of my writings. “Without getting too deep into it, definitely; as a form of loss, yes. All experiences seep into my writing, but the fire, however pivotal, was only one of many experiences,” she reveals with a rare grounded realism.

Ambre takes her personal and classy songs to the stages of Vancouver on a regular basis and is managing to eke out a living primarily from music. “I have a strong jazz quartet that plays jazz, Latin, blues and pop-jazz, and I also play solo,” she enthuses. Increasingly high profile shows are coming her way as she lays the foundations for what could prove an important sophomore release. “Vaguely, my next album will be done in ‘08! I would dare to say around June,” she estimates. “The title will come later, but I know that the material, compared to my current CD, will be even more jazzy.”

I think ‘Norrie C’ will be very pleased to hear this from Ambre. In concluding his or her comment on *The Guardian*’s website, this fan states loud and clear: “She is sensational!” Indicators already exist that observers within the Canadian music industry think likewise and are keeping a keen eye on Ambre Rippon’s progress. But if any such bods might be reading, be warned that whatever’s on the table, this is a young woman who knows exactly what she wants... and looks certain to get it.

Path of Soul is available now from Ambre’s website www.ambresong.com and www.cdbaby.com; and also at Timbuktu in Qualicum Beach. ~

PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENT LOOKING FOR A FAMILY TO PHOTOGRAPH

North Island College photography student, Rebecca Flegel is looking for a family to photograph for an important part of her coursework.

“I need to live with the family for a week,” she told us. “I need to photographically document everything the family does from

the time they get up in the morning, to the time they go to bed for the night.”

Rebecca is looking for a family consisting of a man and wife, plus two or more children. You must be an active family who likes to get out and do things. And you must

be available to start the adventure soon, as Rebecca’s “Photo Essay” must be completed by March 31, 2008.

For full details, contact Rebecca at becky_flegel@msn.com
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Home: (250)757-8112