

anaïs mitchell

press release

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact Righteous Babe Records:
Anna Kapechuk, anna@righteousbabe.com
Phone: 716-852-8020 x13
label website: www.righteousbabe.com
artist website: www.anaismitchell.com
press website: www.righteousbabe.com/press/anais/thebrightness

oh, the places she's gone! anaïs mitchell's righteous babe records' debut the brightness is poetry in motion. in stores february 13, 2007.



“...a songwriter of startling clarity and depth, equally skilled at turning a melody or lyrical phrase into what you didn't know you needed until you heard it.”

— Acoustic Guitar

From her birthplace on a Vermont sheep farm to Beirut cafés, Cairo apartments and Austin recording studios, Anaïs (ah-NAY-iss) Mitchell has been around. Therefore, it's no surprise that **The Brightness**, Mitchell's Righteous Babe debut, is infused with the restless, worldly perspective of a real troubadour.

“I've got this lingering feeling/It's like I've slipped between the fingers of the century/I know you know what I mean,” sings the 25-year-old singer/songwriter on the song “Of A Friday Night”—a storm cloud of a piano ballad. Anaïs' “lingering feeling” of being in the right place at the wrong time could also be interpreted as the plight of modern-day artists, who are up against an American Idolized industry that's all about judging a book by its cover.

With **The Brightness**, Mitchell gives us a glimpse into the raw talent and infectious energy of today's underground folkies, not to mention a handful of the places she's been. Over the course of 11 songs, listeners are transported to Bethlehem and the Virginia countryside; they bathe in New Mexico moonlight and hear the world whizzing by from the inside of a hobo's train car. But for all of its worldliness, this is a lovingly homemade album. During the recording process, Anaïs lived above the studio, which was built into an old Vermont gristmill. She could wake up, shake the sleep out of her eyes and record tracks in her pajamas.

Recorded with producer and long-time collaborator Michael Chorney and a handful of Vermont-based artists, **The Brightness** is anchored by sparse, unpretentious arrangements, whether it's the charming backwoods banjo of “Shenandoah,” Chorney's warm lap-steel playing, or Mitchell's acoustic guitar work, which is almost harp-like in its soft, economical beauty. On the rare occasions when the production gets richer, it's instantly memorable—especially the wave of vocal harmony that washes over the chorus of “Your Fonder Heart.”

Given the absence of production tricks and the near-lack of percussion—drummer Chuck Terranova appears on a mere two tracks—Anaïs' lyrics give **The Brightness** its major source of light. Instead of a musician, she credits “The Alexandria Quartet,” a series of four novels by British author Lawrence Durrell, as the main influence behind the record. This is songwriting with a stress on the latter half of the word, where the hooks are in the syllables as much as they're in the melodies.

Mitchell spins stories about forgotten old poets, jilted lovers and the three wise men, making each one a distinct chapter of one cohesive work. Her lyrics tackle the personal and political with equal aplomb, often blurring the lines between the two. In fact, thin lines are a recurring theme in her music, whether it's between friends and lovers, religion and violence, or prosperity and pain. On **The Brightness**, Anaïs Mitchell is going somewhere, and you're invited to come along. Chances are it's a trip you won't soon forget.

— end —

