

The Anita Lofton Project

BY SJIMON GOMPERS »



The move an artist makes from punk beginnings to more complicated crafts is fascinating to hear. Anita Lofton makes the trek with the Anita Lofton Project.

Formerly of punk trio Sistas in the Pit, the talented guitarist and singer-songwriter gave up her wah-wah, smallstone and rat pedals for greater things. With her former Sistas she toured China and Europe, and took an infamous national tour supporting a certain James “Iggy Pop” Osterberg and the Stooges during that band's reunion in 2007. She claims to have “traded in her Marshall half stack and Epiphone semi hollow body casino for a microphone and an Epiphone acoustic guitar,” yet she’s got the rock in her blood. With Anita’s new minimal and acoustic approach she expresses a new direction in songwriting that is as candid, earnest, cool and assertive while

seeking greater understanding of others and cloaking sentiment in attitude.

The first track Anita sent to me was “I Can’t Understand,” a lover's spat set to strings. “I am up and you are down / I need to plant my feet on the ground / It’s alright, it’s okay / I got you, hold on tight / it’ll be alright ‘cause I got you / something is comin’ and I feel like I’m out of reach / something is comin’ and I feel like I’m out to sea.”

The Anita Lofton Project, "I Can't Understand"

On the end of "sea" she echoes the *ee* sound twice. It's a subtly pensive and vulnerable moment within a song where her mood is a tough-as-nails assertion of the self amid shaking and quarrelsome waters. The compelling antinomies of her verse continue on the second track I received called "I'll Let You Down." She stirs a build up beginning with her kinetic/poetic verse.

The third track "Naw Naw" showcases Anita's eclectic homage to Iggy through a "No Fun" salute. A song that thrives on a punky blues progression while keeping things chill and minimal, including a wise and responsive violin that sounds straight out of the shtetle!

The Anita Lofton Project is accomplished with the help of friends from prestigious musical backgrounds. Wanika Stephens was born to the founders of the Jazz Church of John Coltrane, is the bassist for San Francisco quintet Ohnedaruth and hosts "Uplift" on KPOO. Zhalisa Clarke is a classically trained violinist who has been in both the Harvard-Radcliffe and the Brooklyn Symphony orchestras and shares the group's affection for building its blueprints from the roots of jazz on up. Anita's transformation from punk idol to jazz muse I can only compare to hearing Richard Hell's "Time," in which he shows the rich Rickenbacker-jangle side to his punk ego. In an even greater departure, Anita draws out new varieties of sounds and acoustic instrumentations to convey larger expressions of greater meanings.