

Carolyn Mark: A Brief History

I grew up on a dairy farm in Sicamous, BC with my Austrian father, my English mother and my Canadian brother. My father, an accomplished violinist, taught me how to play the piano when I was very young. He liked nothing better than to play duets with me for any visitors that happened by. Paying no heed to the musical tastes of the times or our guests, my father would perform for his hostages, launching into a favourite Dvorak or Chopin, poking me in the back with his bow if I appeared forget-ful, shy or unenthused. Mortified, I longed for giant flames to eat the piano and my father.

I have since developed a more light-heart- ed relationship with music. My first band was The Vinaigrettes. We started as an all-girl foursome from Victoria and played together, in spite of a dizzying number of lineup changes, for seven years. We toured our pop-surf-punk-art-country-rock asses across Canada several times, but then, after a few years, Brigitte, the smart one of the group, consulted an atlas and we started venturing South when we realized that Los Angeles was closer to Victoria than Edmonton — and the swimming was better! The Vinaigrettes recorded six albums, achieving a modest amount of obscurity, and broke up in 1998 due to "nervous indifference" and "creative exhaustion," vowing to "sue the industry for abandonment," and leaving dozens of fans mildly disappointed. Exhausted and emotionally crushed by the failure of my first band and the ensuing two year bender, I attempted to find solace in the rehearsal spaces of other bands such as: Hat Head, The Fixin's, The

Show Business Giants, The Metronome Cowboys, The Corn Sisters (a duo with label-mate Miss Neko Case), Monster Tweety, and Klugman. But eventually, while hiding under the bed at one of our neverending house parties, I decided to use my own name when I played. So far it's been a good idea — I'm not married to any one style of music, I can play solo or with a band depending on the money or my mood, and it's almost impossible for me to break up with myself.

Influences, you say? Jr. Gone Wild, Jerry Jerry, Young Fresh Fellows, The Show Business Giants, Lucinda Williams, Wanda Jackson, Pink Floyd, Blondie, Gordon Lightfoot, Luann Kowalek, Loudon Wainright III, Dan Bern, Patsy Cline, Lucky Ron, both Elvises, Johnny Cash, Astor Piazzola, Skeeter Davis, Nick Lowe, Peggy Lee, Merle Haggard....

Discography:

Party Girl (2000)

Terrible Hostess (2002)

The Pros and Cons of Collaboration (2004)

Just Married: An Album of Duets (2005)

Nothing is Free (2007)

Let's Just Stay Here w/ NQ Arbuckle (coming Oct 13, 2009)

Plus

The Corn Sisters, The Other Women (2000)

Various, Carolyn Mark Presents a Tribute to Robert Altman's Nashville (2002)

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