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News

INTERVIEW: Tess Parks Ned Raggett , November 12th, 2013 06:51

Plus, first spin of Gates Of Broadway from Toronto singer-songwriter's debut album Blood Hot

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Photograph courtesy of Luis Mora

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Rob Ford may by default be the most famous Toronto citizen when it comes to current events - and he's nobody's idea of a singer - but we can all be thankful that his antithesis exists who deserves all the attention he's hoovering up along with all the crack fumes. Allegedly, Tess Parks was born and raised in the city, came to London for a while, returned home, got a band together and is about to release her debut album *Blood Hot* on 359 Music this month. Not bad for a twenty one-year-old.

Planted squarely in a tradition of classic rock with a slightly fried, moody edge, it's an engaging listen, and we're premiering album cut 'Gates Of Broadway' here today, along with a quick question and answer snagged while Parks was back in the UK for some dates.

CherryRedRecords
Tess Parks - Gates Of Broadway

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Did the album come together for you and your band fairly rapidly? Were its songs already pretty well worked in your head before recording?



Tess Parks: Yes for sure, some of these songs go as far back as when I was 12, 13. I have about three hundred songs so it was really hard for me to choose what went on the record! But it all came together and I'm happy with the song choices.

Have you always been a singer one way or another? Do your parents ever have any stories about that from when you were younger?

TP: My mom tells a great story about how one time she was at the bank and I was about two and singing in my tram and a woman came up to her and she said, "Your daughter has a lovely voice, she is going to be a singer."

Your bio mentions photography as another passion of yours - how does it intertwine with your art, and does inspiration and creation regularly cross between the two media?

TP: Definitely. I document everything I do and everywhere I go, through writing poetry or songs or taking pictures. I don't want to forget anything and I don't want to die leaving nothing behind.

Comparisons are inevitably wearying and limiting for anyone making their initial mark, but I do get a strong vibe of David Roback's work with Kendra Smith in Opal and Hope Sandoval with Mazzy Star given everyone's collective performance, as well as some of Mojave 3's earliest work. What about the kind of gentle-but-powerful slow burn of those performers and those who work in similar styles impacts you the most as a listener?

TP: It's funny, I keep getting compared to Mazzy Star, I really love Hope Sandoval and her voice is so beautiful... That kind of music inspires me a lot. That's a hard question though... some things are just indescribably music to my ears.

'Somedays' is your new single - is there any background story to the song you'd feel comfortable in sharing?

TP: I wrote this song when my best friend moved out of the flat we were sharing a few days after my twentieth birthday. She was the best friend that I made in London, early on when I was seventeen, and we fell out and I was so sad and living in this flat by myself. Wouldn't leave the house, wasn't eating or talking to anybody... Just crying for days. I finally left the flat and went and asked my friend Patrick on Denmark Street to re-string my guitar and it sounded so nice again. I went back to mine and wrote 'Somedays' in five minutes in the dark of this little high-ceiling, metre-wide closet and recorded the demo right afterwards. I still felt like shit, but I was writing a lot at that time. Sometimes rock bottom solitary confinement is