

Basia Bulat - Good Advice (2016)

Wpisany przez bluelover
Czwartek, 11 Luty 2016 16:56 -

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01 – La La Lie 02 – Long Goodbye 03 – Let Me In 04 – In the Name Of 05 – Time 06 – Good Advice 07 – Infamous 08 – Fool 09 – The Garden 10 – Someday Soon

Sometimes making a break-up album is driving 600 miles to Kentucky to record the free-est songs you can get to tape. Sometimes it's standing in a studio with a new friend behind the boards, and you're shouting the words, "Come back / Or don't." Sometimes it's your fourth album, sometimes it's your best, sometimes the answer to your aching heart is a song in a major key.

Good Advice is the fizzing, phosphorescing new pop LP by songwriter Basia Bulat. Captured and produced by My Morning Jacket leader Jim James in Louisville, KY, it follows on 2013's Polaris- and Juno-nominated Tall Tall Shadow and two years of tour-dates alongside acts like Sufjan Stevens, Daniel Lanois and Destroyer. These are 10 songs of desire and redemption, lit up with a bottle-rocket of liberated, faintly psychedelic sound. "Basia has something truly unique," James says, "and her music was a truly extraordinary thing to witness."

In July 2014, Bulat got into her mom's car and drove the nine hours to Kentucky. Good Advice was created over the course of this and two subsequent visits, transforming slow acoustic demos into swift, bright pop-songs. "I knew immediately that it was the exact right place to be," she recalls. With a fading relationship at her back, this was an opportunity to sing away the sorrow and regret. And for James it was a chance to "watch and hear [Basia's] voice just exploding out of her soul, bringing us all to tears in the control room."

Despite a shared love for classic gospel, soul and country, Bulat and James resolved not to

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make a throwback record. Good Advice mixes classic, sterling songwriting with radiant, contemporary sounds – trembling organ, loose drums, lightning-rod electric guitar. Bulat was never able to shake her vision of the night sky on 4th of July, pitch-black above a basketball court. All that “space and emptiness,” all that bleakness, split apart by the “beauty and lawlessness” of amateur fireworks.

Good Advice takes that night and pours it across 41 minutes. Heartbreak calls for fireworks, and pop songs are the nearest thing. “Pop songs can take all those big statements and those big feelings that you have,” she says. “You don’t need to necessarily have everything so detailed because everybody understands. Everybody understands those feelings.” --- Sean Michaels, basiabulat.com

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