

RUBY THE RABBITFOOT

New As Dew (Normaltown Records)

“I had an ‘aunt’ my cousins and I thought was a witch,” Ruby the RabbitFoot explains, her South Georgia drawl lagging after a long day at work. “So I think I’m connected to that world. Even though shit seems to always hit the fan, I feel like a lucky charm.”

So explains Ruby’s adopted surname: homage to that taxidermied appendage of some poor carrot-hunter dyed an ungodly shade of pink and attached to a faux gold keychain so young kids in despair can have something to wish upon. The truck stop talisman easily found at any of the many highway oases along the roads that lead Saint Simons Island, Georgia. Ruby grew up there in “a little brick house by the marsh.”

“We were a household of hippies. I was influenced to look to nature for answers. I didn’t grow up Protestant or Catholic or anything like that. I grew up believing in magic and that’s kind of like teaching someone about faith. Accepting that it’s not all up to you.”

Art and music was also in the family. Her grandfather was a singer; a “crooner turned farmer.” The aforementioned ‘aunt’ was a well-to-do erotic novelist. So when Ruby wasn’t building bonfires or raising Dalmatians or exploring Okefenokee Swamp with her cousins and brother, she was singing and painting. Around the age of 13, she picked up a guitar and started writing songs of her own. Five years later, Ruby was under the lights at an open mic night, riding the buzz of performing live. Nevertheless, her visual talents prevailed and she soon found herself in college as an art student. But art school never seemed to fit. Ruby bounced around from college to college, writing and recording at home throughout the whole ordeal.

“Eventually, I decided that I wanted to spend all of my time making music.”

Those songs developed into *No Weight, No Chain*, an excellent debut of buoyant folk and pop, which Ruby recorded with the help of label mate and fellow Athenian, Nate Nelson. Despite the album’s regional success, she still wasn’t sold on her chosen path.

“Pretty soon I learned that you can’t run from it,” Ruby recalls. “That’s *New As Dew*; a culmination of songs written during time when I accepted the life of an artist.”

New As Dew is a brilliant addition to the RabbitFoot canon. Humid grooves, glittering guitars, barnacle-sharp piano melodies, and Ruby’s deft turn of phrase make for an intoxicating elixir. One that is undoubtedly inspired by the bohemian trials of Athens, but which also indirectly invokes the swamps and shorelines of her youth. Credit Nelson again for the diverse production. “The Shelf” roars wide-open, while “Infinity” sees Ruby swathed in a quilt of kudzu and Spanish moss. The title track finds her brimming with swagger; talk singing atop a skittering combination of steady rhythm and syncopated guitar riff. “Misery” draws on the calypso-folk of *No Weight, No Chain*’s ear worm, “Do Me Right.” The soaring coda of “Ring Around” brings it all to a close, cool air whipping through the driver’s side window as Ruby races the sunrise up Prince Avenue.

Don’t be fooled; this RabbitFoot is riding on talent, not luck.