

Patricia Barber - Smash (2013)

Written by bluesever

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01 – Code Cool 02 – The Wind Song 03 – Romanesque 04 – Smash 05 – Redshift 06 – Spring Song 07 – Devil's Food 08 – Scream 09 – The Swim 10 – Bashful 11 – The Storyteller 12 – Missing Musicians: Patricia Barber - vocals, piano; Jon Deitemyer - drums; Larry Kohut - bass; John Kregor - guitar.

Contemporary jazz? Cool jazz? A throwback to the Great American Songbook when jazz was in fact the popular music of the day? Yes to some...No to others with Patricia Barber's *Smash* one of the best vocal recordings for 2013.

Singer, lyricist, composer...A jazz triple threat. In reviewing the press release there was one point that immediately caught my eye when discussing her work on *Smash*. Barber speaks to the silence of the human condition, the sound of a heart breaking while no one hears it. I translate this lyric into no one having the market cornered on misery. While currently dealing with a potentially life threatening illness, I find Patricia Barber's *Smash* oddly cathartic. Barber goes on to add the sound of a heart breaking should be the loudest and perhaps most primal of emotions. While once warned by a former editor in attempting to explain what the listener may hear, I do not. I also stay away from the self indulgent but hopefully like Barber, celebrate the ability of a shared perspective

Barber's Concord debut borders somewhat on beatnik poetry while remaining true to her artistic sense of self. New tunes, a new band and evidently a new perspective find *Smash* living up to it's name. With each change in life comes the human growth and development that is the musical DNA of this Chicago native. The slightly whimsical if not ironic twist allows one to think, but takes you on holiday while never leaving your home. There is the anger over the gay rights issue which was seemingly only addressed when Vice President Biden spoke out and there is the more introspective look at Barber addressing the pain of love lost. While Barber and I may

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take polar opposites on certain socio-political issue, Smash does not deal with issues but instead raw emotions felt by everyone. To touch, to feel, to think...Barber's Smash accomplishes what every artists should set out to accomplish and to do so with cutting edge honesty and raw emotion makes this particular release in staggering scope. ---Brent Black, criticaljazz.com

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