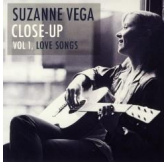


Suzanne Vega - Close-Up Vol. 1 Love Songs (2014)

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1 *Small Blue Thing* 4:04 2 *Caramel* 3:06 3 *(If You Were) In My Movie* 2:55 4 *Gypsy* 4:09 5 *Marlene On The Wall* 4:15 6 *(I'll Never Be) Your Maggie May* 3:36 7 *Harbor Song* 4:17 8 *Headshots* 2:54 9 *Songs In Red And Gray* 4:15 10 *Stockings* 3:39 11 *Some Journey* 4:22 12 *Bound* 4:15 Bass – Mike Visceglia Electric Guitar – Gerry Leonard Vocals, Acoustic Guitar – Suzanne Vega

The first in a proposed four-volume collection of intimate re-recordings of Suzanne Vega's catalog, *Close Up, Vol. 1* focuses on Vega's love songs, which means that her two biggest hits, "Luka" and "Tom's Diner," are nowhere to be heard. The best-known tune here may be "Marlene on the Wall," a song from her 1985 debut, which indicates that this is a bit of a crate-digging exercise, reaching deep into various corners from throughout her career. Vega's new arrangements are anchored on acoustics but not strictly stripped naked: there are other guitars, sometimes electrics, along with traces of bass and percussion, enough to give this some texture and shade but not enough to distract from the songs themselves, all of which are nicely chosen and warmly delivered. There are no radical reinterpretations, only unadorned readings that reveal the sound structure of her readings and her sly, subtle singing. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

Back in the mid-80s, when folk music was in the doldrums, a New York-based acoustic guitarist and singer-songwriter was hailed as the scene's new saviour, thanks to her cool, classy songs and often highly personal lyrics. Whether "folk" was the right description for Suzanne Vega is of course debatable, for there were few traditional influences in much of her work, but she deservedly sold millions of albums and notched up hits with *Luka* and *Tom's Diner*. Now she has decided to re-record much of her catalogue in new "stripped down versions", with four

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themed albums that will each include songs from across her career. The first set, Love Songs, includes the 1985 favourites Marlene on the Wall and Small Blue Thing, but if you switch between the original vinyl and the new CD there are not that many differences. She has removed the synthesisers from Lenny Kaye's original production but added electric guitar, while her singing is now a little slower and more confident, but with the same quiet charm. From later in her career there's Songs in Red and Gray, a gently edgy piece about meeting the daughter of a former lover, or the more recent Bound, on love and ageing. If these were new songs this would be one of the albums of the year. ---Robin Denselow, theguardian.com

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