

Mistress of Folk Knuckles Down

BY LLUVIA MULVANEY-STANAK

With the turn of a new year, as turns a new record from the mistress of folk, Ani Difrancu. Somehow amidst her crazy world-wide touring schedule, she has found time to release her 20-something album: *Knuckle Down*. A clear break from her days of jazz-folk back up bands and powerhouse-political prose, this new CD takes you back to that “Little Plastic Castle.”

Unlike past records, for this album Difrancu consciously wrote and arranged the tracks, a distinct departure from her days of strumming out songs and later arranging them into an eclectic composition. Perhaps this is the key to the flow and intensity of *Knuckle Down*.

Per the usual highs and lows of a Difrancu album, this one focuses on *love* and the many routines and revelations that result. The single, “Manhole,” appears to be a brighter, boppier track, but once you break out the liner notes,

Knuckle Down
Ani Difrancu
Righteous Babe Records
Released January 2005

you realize that it is a 2005 “Two Little Girls” directed at her ex-husband, just oozing with anger, heartbreak and perspective.

The entire album is a tribute, reflection, a made-public healing process of that recent divorce from her husband and the death of her father. The track “Recoil” is a tribute to her dad. With lines like: “Course, then I think of my dad who time travels mostly now, back to when he was free and holding out hope somehow,” it shows the type of intimacy that makes Difrancu’s sound so endearing and deeply personal for each of her fans.

It also continues to chronicle her rebirth of independence that started with her last release, *Educated Guess*.

A return to her roots, of just Ani and her guitar – but with a clear nod to her musical growth over the past decade. Her concentration on word choice is not lost

on her audiences. They lead one directly into the heart, mind and soul of one of the funkiest folk singers to come out of Buffalo, NY.

The take-home message that so many of her albums leave ringing in a fan’s ears is once again simply being “okay with yourself, with where you are at” – in the aftermath of heartbreak and heartache when it comes to those you love. ▼

Lluvia is a big, flaming, queer and is the 2005 10th Annual “Winter Is a Drag” Ball King!

The entire album is a tribute, a reflection, a made-public healing process of a recent divorce from her husband and the death of her father.



Best of the Best

BY GLO DALEY

Tina Turner starts out her new CD *All The Best* with a warm and lively “Open Arms,” fulfilling my fantasies from the get-go. This cut is a new single, and I am reminded of how much I appreciate the tender content of the material she has chosen

to work with over the years. Yes, a love song is a love song, and they are a big part of her material. Yet the choices she has made seem more mindful, rich and poignant than the usual fare. I can’t hear her without thinking of the stories of hardship and abuse I read about years ago in her autobiography *I, Tina*. The woman has stamina! And she is still creating new stuff

... three new pieces on this album.

There is plenty of heartbreak available to dip into. “Missing You,” “When the Heartache is Over,” and “I Can’t Stand the Rain” (always a killer) take us to the bitter/sweet, painful and somehow so delicious achy times we have all known. Oh Tina!

And if that isn’t enough, throw in the odd bit of desperation with “I Don’t Want to Lose You”, and some sharp cynicism in “Goldeneye,” “Addicted to Love,”

All The Best
Tina Turner

Capitol Records
Released Nov. 2004

and, an old fave, “Private Dancer.” I can just see those incredible legs pumping away ... Wheeooo, what a ride! She puts out the purely sexual in “Why Must We Wait Until Tonight?” Shame on anyone who would make her wait ... O.K. so I’m in love. Think she’d be willing to run for president in 2008?

Rounding out the rough and gritty are some sweet and hopeful sounds that lift and inspire, notably “Tonight” with David Bowie, “Open Arms,” and her final song “Something Beautiful Remains” ... and it does, it does. ▼

Glo Daley is an old dyke living on her social security in a barn in Huntington while the youth of America are apparently slaving away to keep her living in such luxury and depravity.