

JOY ASKEW

Drunk On You

(SELF RELEASED)



Joy Askew's intimate voice has recently elevated records by Sufjan Stevens

and Okkervil River, but these ten beautifully executed tracks really allow it to shine. An experienced songwriter, musician and producer, Askew uses all her skills to create and present a world populated with intriguing stories, characters and issues with the assistance of a group of top-flight musicians.

Emotion pours from her piano and vocals, but although songs like the title track or "AOAO" may have been inspired by private or public events, nothing is explicit. Most of the time, she only hints at the details. Is "I Broke The Law" about illegal immigration? The more you listen, the more you notice beautiful and clever touches of instrumentation and turns of phrase, but the mystery deepens. The song weaves family ties, emotion and conscience in a melody that builds, resolves and repeats with finely orchestrated precision until The Hungry March Band crashes in like untidy reality. The beautiful "Walk Under Waterfalls" perfectly describes the pain of losing her musical heroes, one of whom is probably Jeff Buckley. The album's most concrete message (from this passionate animal rights activist) comes in "My Life," where she sings, "I feel we could feed the world/But we never do the right thing."

KAY CORDTZ