

A Bard Named Jaime

by Chiemi

Singer-Songwriter Jaime Bard will be serenading her fans at The Sherman Café in Union Square on Sunday May 7 at the Somerville News Music and Poetry Series Event (begins at 3p.m.) Juliana Bures and Cheryl Devitt will be the featured poets.

Bard's music is rhythmic and warm. Her excellent fingers move dexterously over the fretboard like an undercurrent while her mobile vocals stop and start. Her demo, recorded in 2003, lays out five gems of expressive clarity. The energy is readily apparent in "wonder giRL boY magNet," which contains punchy words relayed by Bard's womanly crooning style. "bReAthe," "QueeN of cuPs" and "LiNes uPon YouR fAce" follow with fine intros, one a bit minor-keyed and played with Bard's expert slap/pick guitar hand. The last track, "RoLL witH the winD" shows off Bard's vocal agility --she intones the catchy chorus with intricately slurred grace notes.

According to Bard, what has inspired her music is "just about everyone I listen to - it's clear that I respect Ani DiFranco's use of

the guitar as a percussion instrument as well as a stringed one. I listen to all sorts of music from Amy Correia and Dar Williams to the roots and the afro celt soundsystem.... what unifies it all is that it is simple, not too heavy, crisp, and intricate in terms of either rhythm or melody."

Bard started playing the piano at age six and then started playing the guitar around the fifth grade. She wrote her first song in the ninth grade and won an Earth Day contest with it such that it became a "commercial" on television and the radio for recycling. However, she said "It wasn't until my freshman year in college when I started really playing out at bars and such. Since then I've been trying to get out as much as I can - though some jobs and graduate school have left me with months in there, when I haven't played at all..."

Originally from Newton, Bard spent the last six years in Philadelphia. Recently, she moved to Porter Square with a new job opportunity at Steppingstone Foundation a non-profit which assists indigent youths in attending private schools and then going on to college.



Warm and rhythmic Jamie Bard performs Sunday at the Sherman Cafe.

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