

90 Day Paper

THE NEW FACE OF FOLK

Jenn Grant's deceptively simple Orchestra For The Moon has critics raving

JASON SCHNEIDER

(Jun 14, 2007)

It sometimes seems like every musician in the Maritimes knows one another. The close-knit network that spans many genres never fails to produce excitingly innovative results. That's certainly the case with Jenn Grant's debut album, *Orchestra For The Moon*, a finely-crafted folk-pop collection that has caught the imagination of critics across the country.

The 22-year-old P.E.I. native has spent much of the past couple of years as a member of acclaimed Halifax pop collective The Heavy Blinkers, so when Grant finally determined to make her own record, the band was eager to lend its adventurous musical spirit to her deceptively simple acoustic-based material.

"I did my first show with them actually as a trio -- me, Jason MacIsaac and Dave Christensen -- then they asked if I'd be a part of the full band for a tour of England and France, which was magical. I got to do some opening sets on my own too. When we would be touring around, the guys would talk about how they wanted to produce someone else's record, so it made sense for us to work together because I wanted to make my first record with



JENN GRANT

people I totally trusted."

Orchestra For The Moon is already being described as Patsy Cline meets Brian Wilson, and the description is essentially accurate given the effortless blend of Grant's haunting vocals with lush strings and shimmering steel guitar. She even coaxed Ron Sexsmith into a duet to complete the overall melancholy effect.

Grant says this first serious effort in a recording studio had an eye-opening effect on how she perceived her own creative process. "It was really interesting working with producers who had the ability to take the music in so many different directions," she says. "I'm totally happy with it, but now I kind of look at it as a learning experience. My next album may be a bit more rootsy, but I'm having a great time with the band right now trying to replicate the sounds on the album in our live show."



Aside from those sounds, the main attraction on the album is Grant's unique singing style, which should appeal to any fan of either The Be Good Tanyas or Feist. She says it actually came about by accident. "It was mainly because I was sick a lot as a teenager, so I never really learned how to use my voice properly when I sang. I did end up taking vocal lessons for a couple of months, which helped a lot with control, but I guess by then I was set in my ways. My biggest influences are singers with distinct styles anyway, like Willie Nelson."

It's unlikely that Grant will be tagged a country artist because of Orchestra For The Moon, but on the other hand, she won't totally fall into the pop realm either. In Grant's view, none of that matters, since she already recognizes the path she is on has been laid down by others. "I look at someone like Sarah Harmer, who can make a really produced record and then turn around and make a really simple record, and I admire that," she says. "That's sort of where I see myself, especially after being surrounded by so many guys with strong opinions for this first album. I have my own vision of what I want to do, and as I learn more I hope to achieve it."

LIVE JENN GRANT JUNE 14 JIMMY JAZZ, GUELPH \$10 9 P.M. 519-767-1694



[View newspaper page \(PDF\)](#)



[Printer friendly format](#)